

## 4. TRANSPORTATION

### TRANSPORTATION VISION

*By 2035, St. Croix County has an efficient, economical, comprehensive, multi-modal transportation network that includes on-demand transit available between all villages and cities. St. Croix County consistently maintains and improves the county road system to meet identified needs. The County has worked with St. Croix municipalities to identify safe roads to establish bike lanes. The County works with municipalities to plan for residential growth and transportation access in tandem. The County is exploring options to provide and adapt to individual transportation choices including various modes of mass transit in addition to bike and pedestrian options. County residents are utilizing the new St. Croix River Crossing from Houlton to Stillwater. Local and county land use plans and ordinances address existing and future land uses related to the crossing. Transportation routes are efficient and well-planned providing good connections between St. Croix River bridges and the rest of the county.*

### INTRODUCTION

Transportation facilities have a significant influence on land use, development, and quality of life for County residents. This section includes a review of transportation facilities found in St. Croix County, including highways, rail, airports, bike facilities, pedestrian facilities, and transit. Please see Figure 4.1. Transportation types primarily off-road and recreational in nature, such as snowmobile, ATV, and hiking trails, are not discussed in this section, but can be found in the community facilities and natural resources sections.

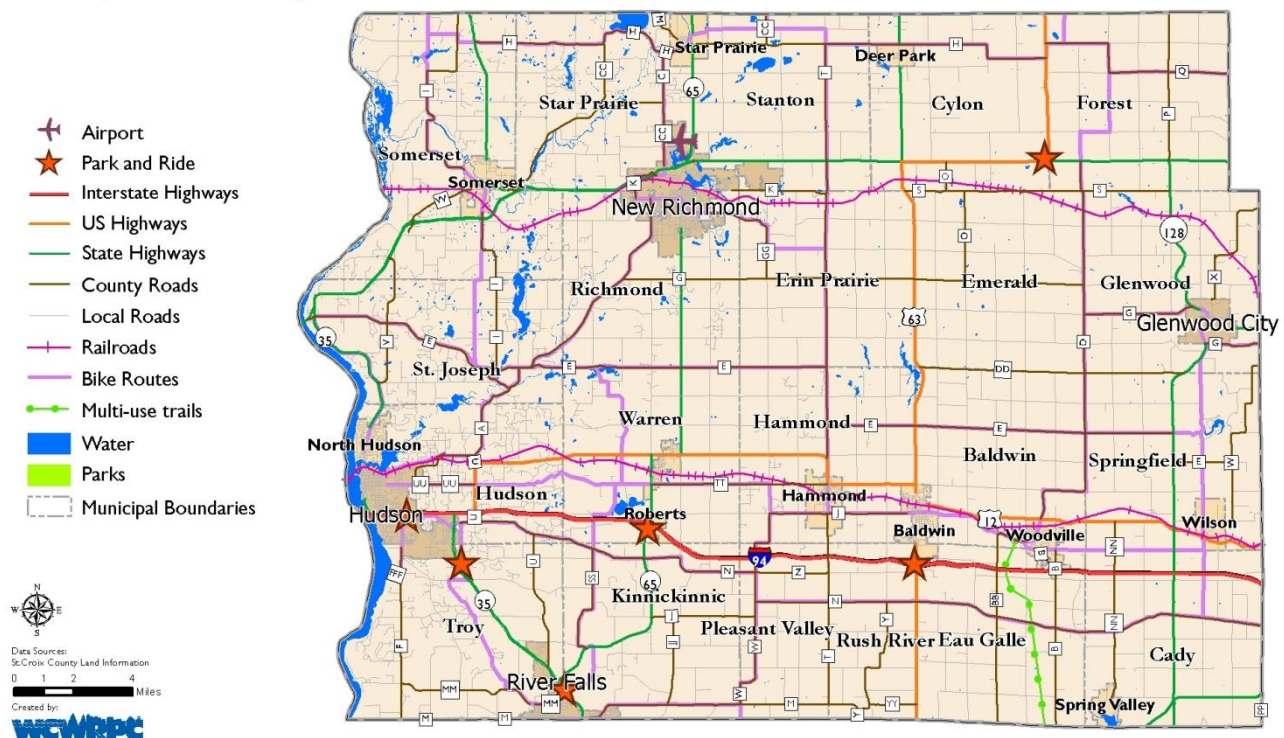
St. Croix County, its local municipalities, and the State of Wisconsin together provide nearly the entire roadway infrastructure for inter-county movements, intra-city movements, and the demands of new growth. This road system also allows the movement of buses, bicycles, and pedestrians. A well-maintained and planned transportation system can aid in economic development, support a variety of land uses, provide links among community facilities, and facilitate the provision of various public and emergency services.

This element will function as a guide to identifying the County's existing and proposed road network, identifying major transportation needs, and supporting the goals and objectives of the other elements of the St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan.

This section was drafted in the context of regional, state, and national transportation planning guidelines and principles. Numerous existing State and local transportation plans of regional significance are considered in the development of this plan. Transportation issues, needs, and strategies specific to individual communities will be addressed in their respective plans.

Figure 4.1 – St. Croix County Transportation System

## Transportation System



## BACKGROUND DATA/EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Highways

St. Croix County is served by 1,925 miles of roads under state, county and local jurisdiction (see Figure 4.2). Major north/south highways include WIS 35, WIS 65, US 63, and WIS 128. Interstate Highway 94, US 12, and WIS 64 are major east/west highways.

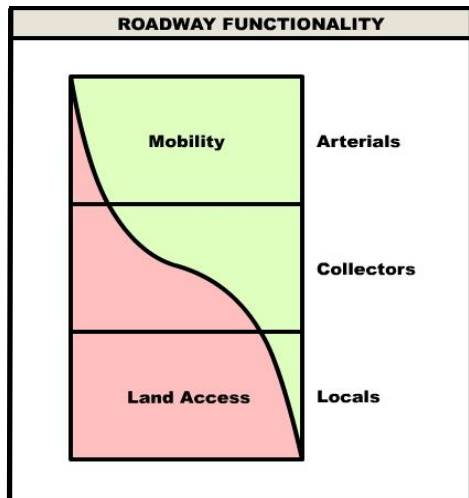
In St. Croix County, Interstate 94 is the only highway classified a backbone route in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Corridors 2020 Plan. US 63 is identified as a Connector route. The backbone system is a collection of multilane highways such as the interstate system and much of the state trunk highway system that serve longer interregional trips within the state and between Wisconsin and the nation. The Connector routes are a set of two- and four-lane highways that connect key communities and regional economic centers to the backbone routes.

Roads can be generally classified into three categories - arterials, collectors and local roads. The type of service it provides determines a road's classification. Typically, arterials provide the least amount of access and highest level of mobility, while local streets provide the most access and lowest level of mobility. Collector roads provide a combination of access and mobility.

FIGURE 4.2 – ROAD MILEAGE BY JURISDICTION 2009 ST. CROIX COUNTY

JURISDICTION	MILES	PERCENT OF TOTAL
State	204.10	10.6
County	338.17	17.6
Towns	1118.65	58.1
Villages	107.13	5.6
Cities	156.90	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1924.95</b>	<b>100.0</b>

source: WisDOT, Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads, January 1, 2009.



The functional classification of the rural areas of the County is shown on Figure 4.3. Three communities are over the population threshold of 5,000 persons, considered to be “urban” for the purposes of functional classification: Hudson, New Richmond, and River Falls (See Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6).

The backbone and connector routes, which link Wisconsin’s economic and tourism centers, are all classified as arterials and are designed to provide a high level of mobility between communities. Typically, arterials accommodate higher levels of traffic at higher speeds than collectors. The actual number of vehicles that a road can accommodate is determined by a number of factors, including the number of travel lanes, posted speed limit and the level of access the road provides. Generally, a two-lane road can accommodate up to 13,500

vehicles per day. A four-lane road with a median can accommodate between 13,500 and 30,000 vehicles per day.

Local roads have been further classified by St. Croix County and local towns into subcollectors and access roads. Subcollectors generally connect major and minor collectors to access roads and provide some access directly to lots. Access roads provide access to lots and higher level roads. Further information on these two classifications can be found in the St. Croix County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 17, Sections [17.09](#) and [17.60](#) and the St. Croix County Land Division Ordinance [Chapter 13](#), Sections 13.7 and 13.13, [http://www.co.saint-croix.wi.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_LIST&SEC={D1648D84-3ECE-4FC7-85BC-D55386B8D210}](http://www.co.saint-croix.wi.us/index.asp?Type=B_LIST&SEC={D1648D84-3ECE-4FC7-85BC-D55386B8D210}). Additionally towns may identify a driveway as a single-purpose road. These are not eligible for road aids.

St. Croix County is directly on the Interstate 94 corridor, the principal arterial between Minneapolis-St. Paul and destinations to the south and east, such as Milwaukee and Chicago. Traffic on the Eau Claire-Hudson portion of the Interstate, which runs through St. Croix County, has been growing significantly. This stretch of Interstate 94 experiences traffic volumes of 40,000 to 70,000 vehicles a day and is the second most-traveled segment of interstate highway in the State of Wisconsin. By 2020, average daily traffic volumes at the I-94 bridge over the St. Croix River are projected to exceed 85,000 vehicles per day.

As shown in Figure 4.7, traffic volumes have been generally increasing throughout the County. In some cases, a particular highway segment’s count can show a decline when alternative routes are constructed or improved. The most current traffic counts can be found at the WisDOT website, <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/counts/stcroix.htm>.

Of the State and US highways located in St. Croix County, the State Highway Plan 2020 identified Interstate 94 from the St. Croix River to US 63 (Baldwin exit), WIS 65 between New Richmond and WIS 12, and a small piece of WIS 35 from North Hudson to Houlton as facilities that would experience moderate congestion by the year 2020 if no capacity expansion improvements were made. Extreme or severe congestion were projected for WIS 64 from Houlton to New Richmond, a small segment of WIS 35 through Hudson, and WIS 63 from Interstate 94 into Baldwin. Only WIS 64 was already a legislatively approved major project. This project has since been completed.

### **Highway Jurisdiction**

The term “transportation system” includes roads and other facilities under different levels of jurisdictional authority. St. Croix County Highway Department in partnership with WisDOT has developed and updated Jurisdictional Studies periodically. Evaluations of various criteria are utilized in determining the jurisdiction of highways. The study recommends possible jurisdictional transfers that best match the jurisdiction of the roads to their function. For example, if a state highway is functioning more as a county road, then the highway should be considered for transfer to the county to be managed as a county road. Likewise, if a county road is functioning more as a state highway, then the road should be considered for a transfer to be managed by WisDOT, the same is true for county to town and town to county considerations.

Ideally, depending upon location specific conditions and variables, all roads classified as local roads would be under town jurisdiction, all roads classified as collector roads would be under county jurisdiction and all roads classified as arterial roads would be under state jurisdiction. Transferring roads to the proper jurisdiction allows that jurisdiction to focus limited resources more effectively and improve road safety. The possible jurisdictional transfers proposed in the Jurisdictional Study should take place over time as opportunities present themselves and the transfers should be based upon a mutual agreement between the affected governmental entities as covered under Wisconsin Statute Chapter 66 - intergovernmental agreements.

### **Road Names**

For Federal, State, and County roadways, the abbreviated designations identify the entity that has jurisdiction of that facility: Interstate Highways (I), United States Highways (USH), State Trunk Highways (STH), and County Trunk Highway (CTH). Local roads are named in conjunction with the County under the Land Division Ordinance Chapter 13. The County adopted a countywide grid numbering system of streets and avenues in the early 1980s for the rural town roads. All but three of the towns have chosen to follow that system. The remaining three towns use road names. The County does not have jurisdiction over road names in cities and villages. There are several areas of the county where address and road name duplication have created confusing and hard-to-find situations. In these locations emergency vehicles are delayed in arriving at properties while clarification and additional site information is ascertained. Existing and potential problems with road names and addresses should be further discussed to find solutions which will improve emergency response times and create safer situations for property owners.

### **St. Croix County Highway Department**

The St. Croix County Highway Department has a six-year plan, currently extending through 2015 that identifies upcoming road maintenance and construction projects. This plan is a guide to reach road improvement goals. These projects are specifically for county roads. The Highway Department has also established a planning guide to address every mile on the County system every five years with either surface maintenance (e.g. crack filling, chip sealing) or rehabilitation/reconstruction. This results in an annual program of 56 miles per year of chip-seal type treatment, 14 miles of pavement replacement and seven miles of reconstruction, widening or new construction. The Highway Department utilizes innovative and outside funding sources such as a County Vehicle Registration Fee and state and federal funding programs to fund highway maintenance and improvements. For further information contact the St. Croix Highway Department at 715.796.2227 or [scchwy@scchwy.org](mailto:scchwy@scchwy.org).

### **Highway Projects in the County**

Various construction and repair projects are programmed for the State highways in St. Croix County between 2008 and 2013. A total of 102 miles are scheduled for improvement over this six-



year period. Current information is available on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation website at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/nw.htm>.

**FIGURE 4.7 – TRAFFIC VOLUME HISTORY 1997-2006 ST. CROIX COUNTY**

MAP ID	MAP 3.1 LOCATION	TRAFFIC COUNTS				PERCENT CHANGE	
		1997	2000	2004	2006	01-03	93-03
1	I-94 (at St. Croix River)	67,400 <sup>#</sup>	72,800*	67,300	67,300 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	-0.15
2	I-94 (west of STH 65)	30,400 <sup>#</sup>	39,700*	40,800	35,500	-14.93	14.37
3	I-94 (west of STH 128)	28,900 <sup>#</sup>	30,100*	31,600	32,600	3.07	11.35
4	STH 35 (south of Vine St., Hudson)	14,000	15,000	13,800	12,400	-11.29	-12.90
5	STH 35/STH 64 (north of County E)	9,000	11,300	12,700	11,900	-6.72	24.37
6	STH 35/STH 64 (west of County I)	9,500	10,600	13,700	8,100	-69.14	-17.28
7	STH 35 (north of STH 64)	4,000	5,400	6,800	5,800	-17.2	31.03
8	STH 35 (north of County H)	3,000	3,600	4,100	3,700	-10.81	18.92
9	STH 64 (west of STH 65)	6,200	5,900	6,700	9,400	28.72	34.04
10	STH 64 (east of STH 65)	4,000	5,400	4,400	3,900	-12.82	-2.56
11	STH 64 (east of US 63)	4,100	4,400	4,600	4,500	-2.22	8.89
12	STH 64 (east of STH 128)	1,100	1,400	1,500	1,500 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	26.67
13	STH 65 (south of County H)	4,600	4,200	4,200	4,900	14.29	6.12
14	STH 65 (north of 11th St., New Richmond)	16,700	16,700	16,800	17,900	6.15	6.70
15	STH 65 (south of County G)	5,300	6,700	8,300	8,200	-1.22	35.37
16	STH 65/US 12 (V. of Roberts)	6,200	7,300	10,300	8,900	-15.73	30.34
17	STH 65 (north of County J)	3,500	3,600	4,300	4,300	0.00	18.60
18	STH 35 (north of County U)	10,600	12,400	11,000	13,900	20.86	23.74
19	STH 35 (north of Coulee Trail)	10,200	11,100 <sup>+</sup>	17,300	16,900	-2.37	39.64
20	STH 46 (north of County H)	3,900	3,900	4,200	4,200 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	7.14
21	STH 46 (north of STH 64)	3,000	3,400	3,100	3,500	11.43	14.29
22	US 63 (north of STH 64)	3,200	3,200	3,400	4,000	15.00	20.00
23	US 63 (north of County DD)	4,100	4,500	4,400	4,700	6.38	12.77
24	US 63 (south of I-94)	2,700	4,800	4,100	4,500	8.89	40.00
25	STH 128 (south of County S)	890	760	820	810	-1.23	-9.88
26	STH 128 (north of US 12)	1,600	2,300	2,300	2,300	0.00	30.43
27	STH 128 (north of STH 29)	1,100	1,700	1,800	1,700	-5.88	35.29
28	US 12 (west of County BB)	2,900	2,700	3,600	3,100	-16.13	6.45
29	Carmichael Road (north of I-94)	10,200	11,400	13,300	12,800	-3.91	20.31
30	County F (north of County MM)	3,800	5,300	5,500	4,800	-14.58	20.83
31	County V (south of County E)	1,600	1,900	2,100	2,100 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	23.81
32	County I (south of Village of Somerset)	1,800	2,400	1,600	3,300	51.52	45.45
33	County A (north of County E)	3,000	3,800	4,700	4,500	-4.44	33.33
34	County A (south of County I)	4,600	6,400	7,500	8,700	13.79	47.13
35	County E (west of STH 65)	560	640	960	960 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	41.67
36	County M (east of County JJ)	910	1,400	1,100	1,100 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	17.27
37	County G (west of County GG)	1,800	2,100	2,100	2,300	8.70	21.74
38	County T (north of County E)	1,300	1,400	1,800	1,900	5.26	31.58
39	County T (north of County M)	870	1,000	1,100	1,100 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	20.91
40	County D (north of County G)	930	1,400	1,400	1,400 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	33.57
41	County B (south of County N)	940	1,100	1,100	1,100 <sup>+</sup>	0.00	14.55

source: Wisconsin Highway Traffic Volume Data, WisDOT -- #denotes 1999 counts, \*denotes 2001 counts, +denotes counts from previous cycle

Figure 4.3 – St. Croix County Rural Functional Classification

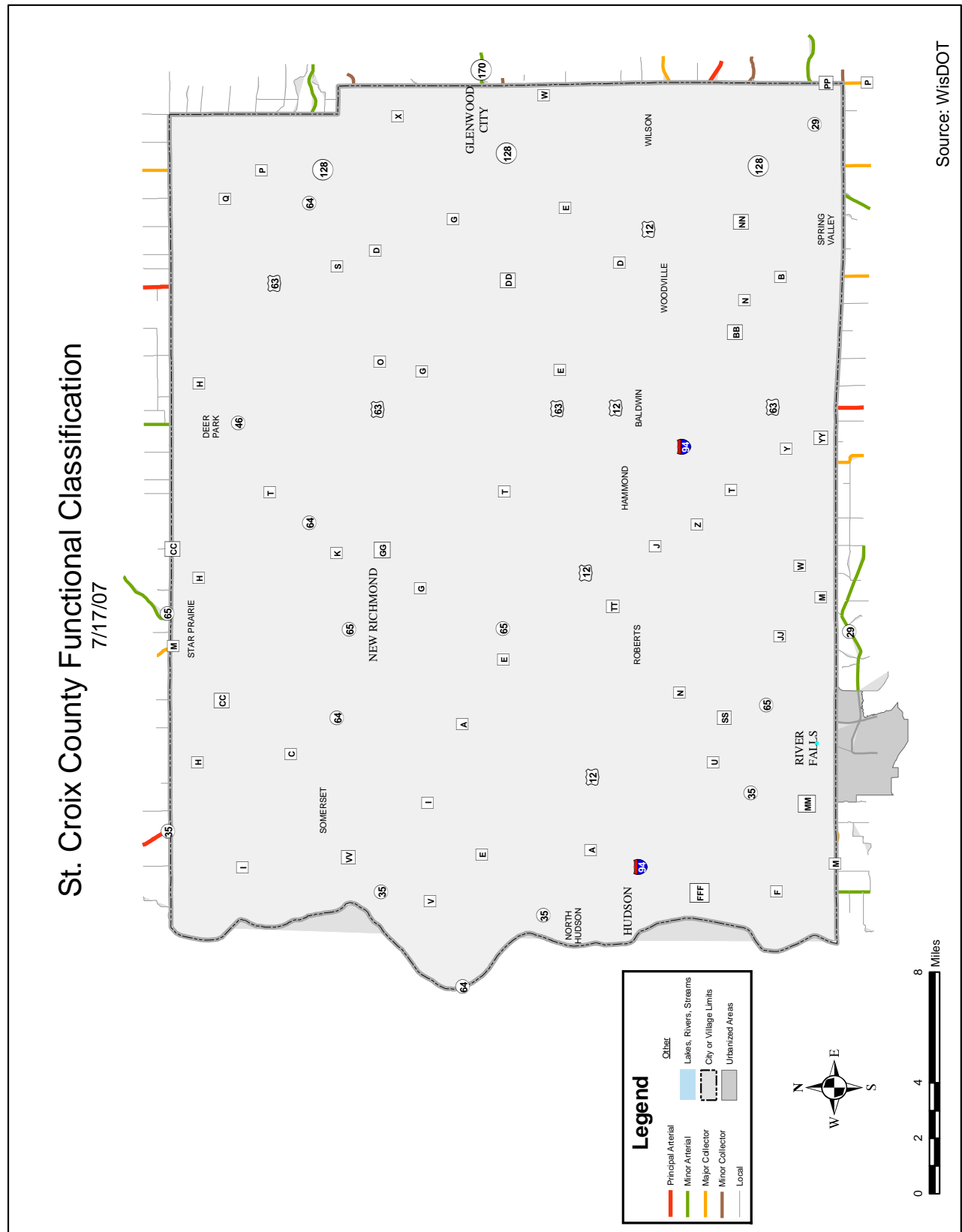


Figure 4.4 – Hudson/N. Hudson Urban Functional Classification

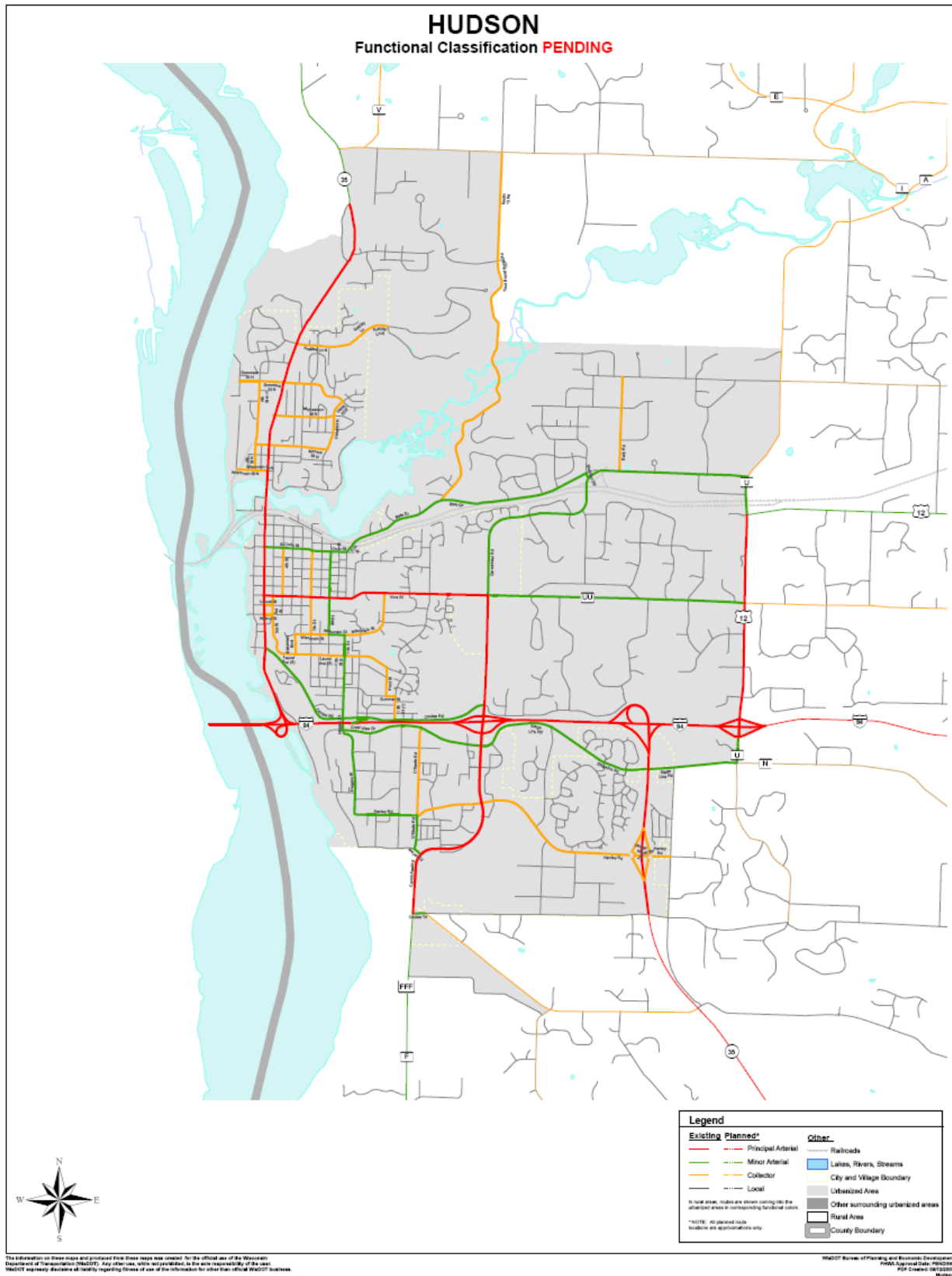
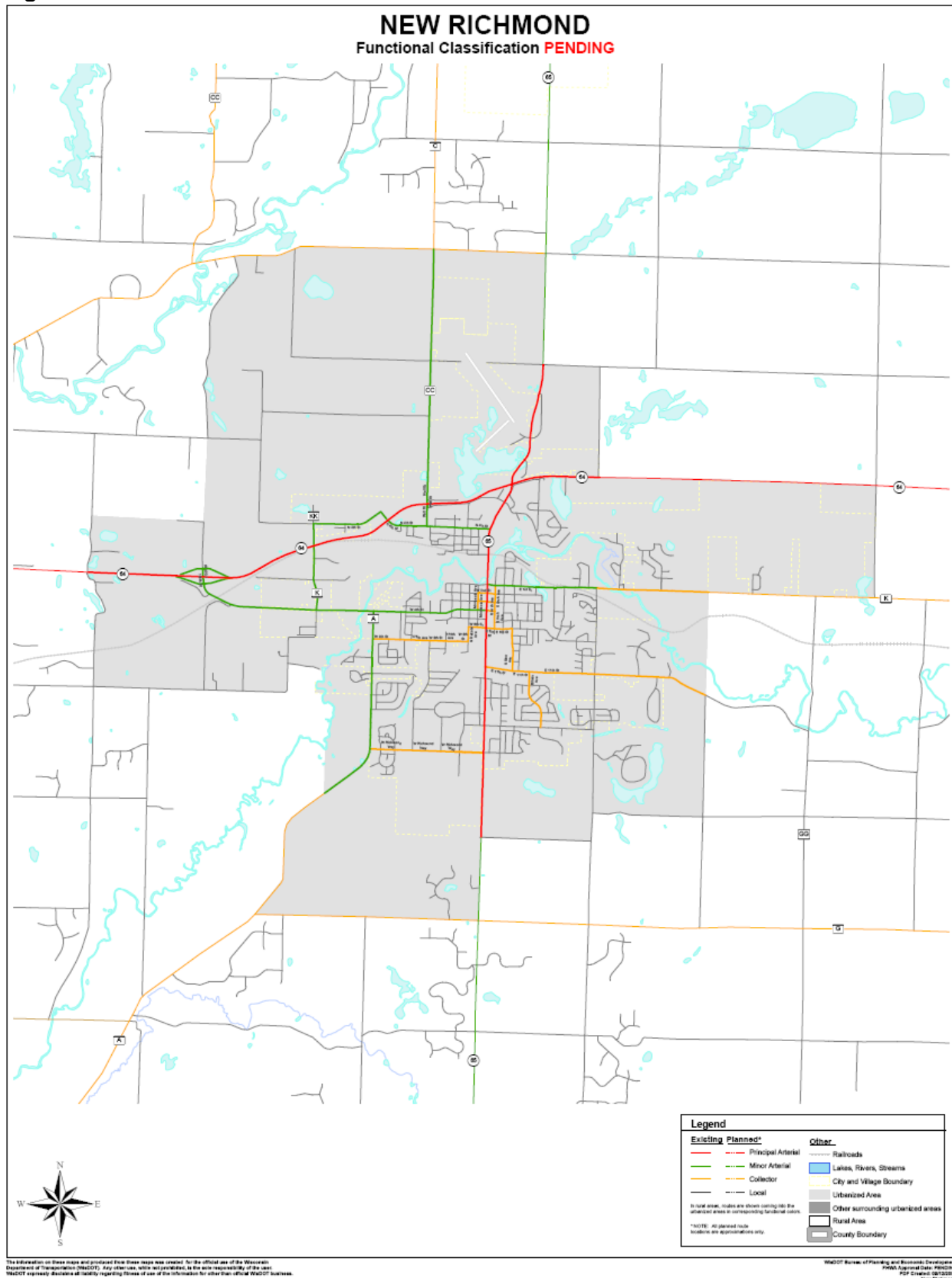
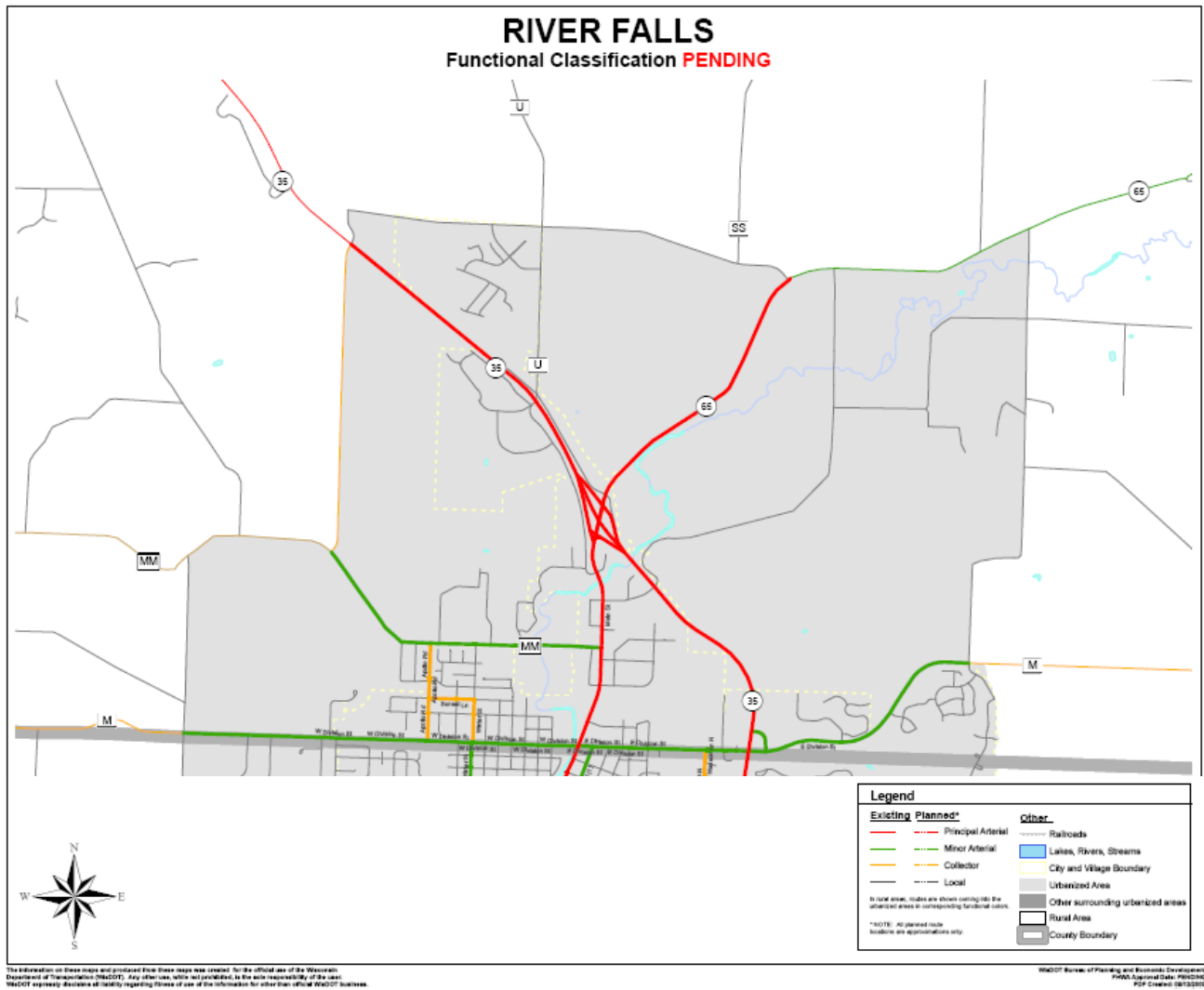


Figure 4.5 – New Richmond Urban Functional Classification





**Figure 4.6 – River Falls (part) Urban Functional Classification**



**FIGURE 4.8 - ROAD MILEAGE BY MUNICIPALITY AND JURISDICTION**

Municipality Name	Gross Road Miles	County Miles	Municipal Miles	County Jurisdiction			Municipal Jurisdiction		
				Arterial	Collector	Local	Arterial	Collector	Local
Towns									
Baldwin	67.32	14.60	52.72		10.28	4.32			52.72
Cady	57.38	11.45	45.93		6.75	4.70			45.93
Cylon	47.31	9.30	38.01		.65	8.65			38.01
Eau Galle	65.68	17.49	48.19		11.46	6.03			48.19
Emerald	64.16	17.71	46.45		8.94	8.77			46.45
Erin Prairie	65.21	18.04	47.17		14.95	3.09			47.17
Forest	61.54	15.29	46.25		6.10	9.19			46.25
Glenwood	64.34	18.00	46.34		13.26	4.74			46.34
Hammond	74.68	16.20	58.48		16.20				58.48
Hudson	109.06	10.62	98.44	5.41	4.90	0.31	4.08	10.45	83.91
Kinnickinnic	64.65	21.42	43.23	0.51	13.35	7.56			43.23
Pleasant Valley	36.80	17.95	18.85		12.08	5.87			18.85
Richmond	82.61	15.79	66.82	2.97	12.82		0.20	1.10	65.52
Rush River	34.73	13.46	21.27		9.36	4.10			21.27
Somerset	115.69	15.00	100.69		11.83	3.17		6.75	93.94
Springfield	57.11	22.85	34.26		10.69	12.16			34.26
Stanton	55.66	13.06	42.60	0.11	11.92	1.03	0.03		42.57
Star Prairie	81.84	19.57	62.27	2.06	17.51		0.08	1.00	61.19
St Joseph	86.17	21.21	64.96	0.27	20.94			11.41	53.55
Troy	102.85	14.96	87.89	6.71	4.16	4.09	0.06	12.72	75.11
Warren	53.06	6.13	46.93		6.13			3.03	43.90
Villages									
Baldwin	23.64	0.18	23.46		0.18			0.88	22.58
Deer Park	3.65	0.62	3.03		0.37	0.25			3.03
Hammond	12.40	0.00	12.40					2.29	10.11
North Hudson	17.45	0.00	17.45					3.80	13.65
Roberts	12.86	0.03	12.83		0.03			2.06	10.77
Somerset	16.78	0.00	16.78					2.81	13.97
Spring Valley	1.27	0.98	0.29			0.98			.29
Star Prairie	6.97	2.07	4.90		2.07				4.90
Wilson	4.33	0.00	4.33						4.33
Woodville	11.30	0.46	10.84			0.46		2.11	8.73
Cities									
Glenwood	9.79	1.06	8.73		1.06			0.25	8.48
Hudson	70.64	0.19	70.45	0.19			11.62	6.84	51.99
New Richmond	58.38	2.27	56.11	1.42	0.69	0.16	3.55	5.11	47.45
River Falls	21.53	.68	20.85	0.36		0.32	1.32	0.83	18.70
TOTALS	1718.84	338.64	1380.20	20.01	228.68	89.95	20.94	73.44	1285.82

source: Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads, WisDOT, January 1, 2008.

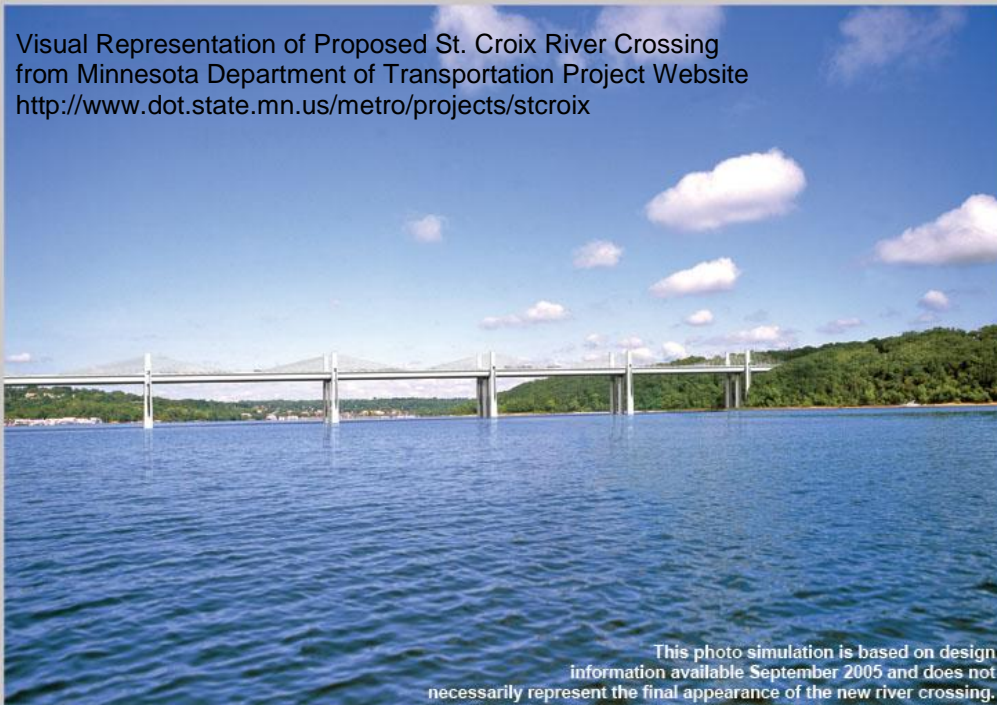
## MAJOR TRANSPORTATION STUDIES AND PROJECTS

### *St. Croix River Crossing*

This project entails the construction of a new MINN 36/WIS 64 bridge across the St. Croix River between the Stillwater, MN (Washington Co.) and Houlton, WI (St. Croix Co.) areas. This is one of only two river crossings between Interstate 94 to the south and U.S. Highway 8 to the north. Increasing tourism, commercial, and commuter traffic from the growing Twin Cities have necessitated a significant upgrade in transportation facilities for the area. Traffic congestion and delays at the existing bridge can become severe during summer months. While the bridge has a daily traffic capacity of 11,200 vehicles according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, it had a 2006 annual average daily traffic count of 17,300 according to WisDOT traffic volume maps.

There are also safety concerns with the aging existing lift bridge. Built in 1931, the Stillwater Lift Bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places and has been closed on occasion due to flooding and ice/debris damming. Crash rates in the existing bridge's vicinity are also substantially above state averages.

Visual Representation of Proposed St. Croix River Crossing  
from Minnesota Department of Transportation Project Website  
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix>



This photo simulation is based on design information available September 2005 and does not necessarily represent the final appearance of the new river crossing.



**River View Looking Upstream - Proposed View of River Crossing - "Organic" Design**

Photo Taken: 08/30/2005

10/03/05

Local discussions regarding the need for a new bridge date back to at least the 1950s; and the more recent planning process for a new crossing has a long history of disputes over location, design, use of the historic bridge, and potential impacts to the St. Croix Riverway. Serious discussions on the replacement of the existing bridge began in the 1980s. Both states jointly completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement for a replacement bridge south of the existing one in 1995. However, environmental groups successfully challenged the project by arguing that

the EIS did not fully consider the National Scenic Riverway status of the St. Croix River; and, thus, the project temporarily stalled.

In 2000, the secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Interior and Transportation stepped in to help break the impasse. After six more years of discussion, community input, and planning, the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement was completed in 2006, though a legal complaint regarding the comment period is currently being considered. While such disputes have undoubtedly delayed the project, it has resulted in a collaboratively designed project considering many diverse perspectives.

As part of the 2006 FEIS, a 2012 completion date was contemplated. In addition to the construction of a new four-lane bridge, the existing lift bridge will be converted to recreational use and linked to a network of trails on both sides of the St. Croix River. On the Wisconsin side of the River, WIS 64 improvements will be made as far northeast as 150<sup>th</sup> Street, limiting access to the realigned four-lane highway. A new intersection for WIS 35/County "E" will also be developed.

Both St. Croix County and the Town of St. Joseph will receive growth management mitigation funding as part of the project for planning, education, ordinance development, acquisition of property or easements, and other related mitigation activities within the corridor. On a more regional scale, there is some expectation that increased mobility and travel speeds offered by the project would increase growth and traffic along the entire corridor (*see US 63/WIS 64 EA below*). Not only would the area become more palatable to potential commuters to the Twin Cities, but it would also offer a quicker route for Twin City residents to travel to northern Wisconsin vacation destinations. The construction of the new St. Croix River Crossing is scheduled to begin in 2013 with completion in 2017.

### ***West Central Regional Freeway System Executive Summary***

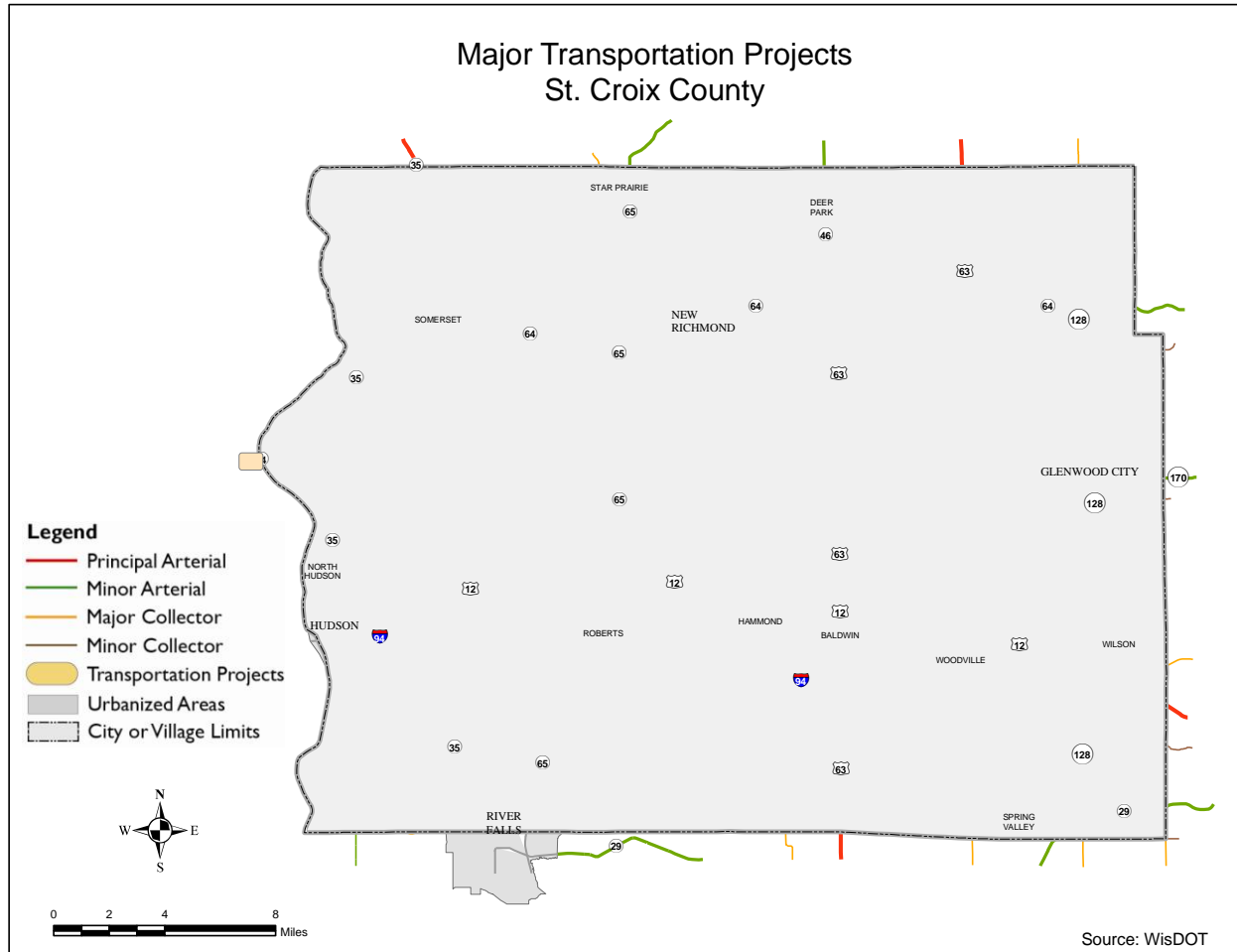
This WisDOT study was created at State Legislative request for a capacity analysis on:

- I-94 in St. Croix, Dunn, and Eau Claire counties;
- STH 65 in St. Croix, Polk, and Pierce counties; and
- STH 35 between River Falls and Hudson in St. Croix County.

The study states that much of the studied freeway system within an "intense zone" in western Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties will be experiencing capacity and operational limitations within a decade. Significant improvements are recommended in the study, such as:

- expanding I-94 to six lanes between Hudson and Baldwin;
- I-94 pavement replacement between Baldwin and Eau Claire;
- completing the WIS 35 freeway conversion between River Falls and I-94, including the Coulee Road over head, local road connections and the Radio Road Interchange on WIS 35; and
- preferred alternatives in the US 63 and WIS 65 EAs.

Figure 4.9 – Major Transportation Projects in St. Croix County



### ***US 63/WIS 64 Environmental Assessment***

This environmental assessment (EA) covers the corridor of WIS 64 between WIS 65 in the City of New Richmond then 12.2 miles east to just past the intersection with County Highway “D” in the unincorporated hamlet of Forest. It also includes a 4-mile long section of US 63 from its intersection with WIS 64 north to the Polk County line. Growth in St. Croix County, the anticipated St. Croix River Crossing project, and the increasing use of this highway for tourism are driving forces in this assessment. For the short-term, the EA recommends corridor preservation, intersection improvements, and the addition of passing lanes. Future improvements would be to expand WIS 64 to a four-lane facility with at-grade, direct-access intersections. Then, farther into the future, the US 63 intersection would become grade-separated with no direct access to the west.

### ***US 63 (I-94 to WIS 64) Environmental Assessment***

WisDOT is currently studying US 63 alternatives that meet future transportation needs and preserve a corridor so that improvements can be implemented at a future date. The future US 63 improvement alternatives should preserve highway mobility on US 63 through and around the Village of Baldwin and north of Baldwin while also addressing local transportation needs.



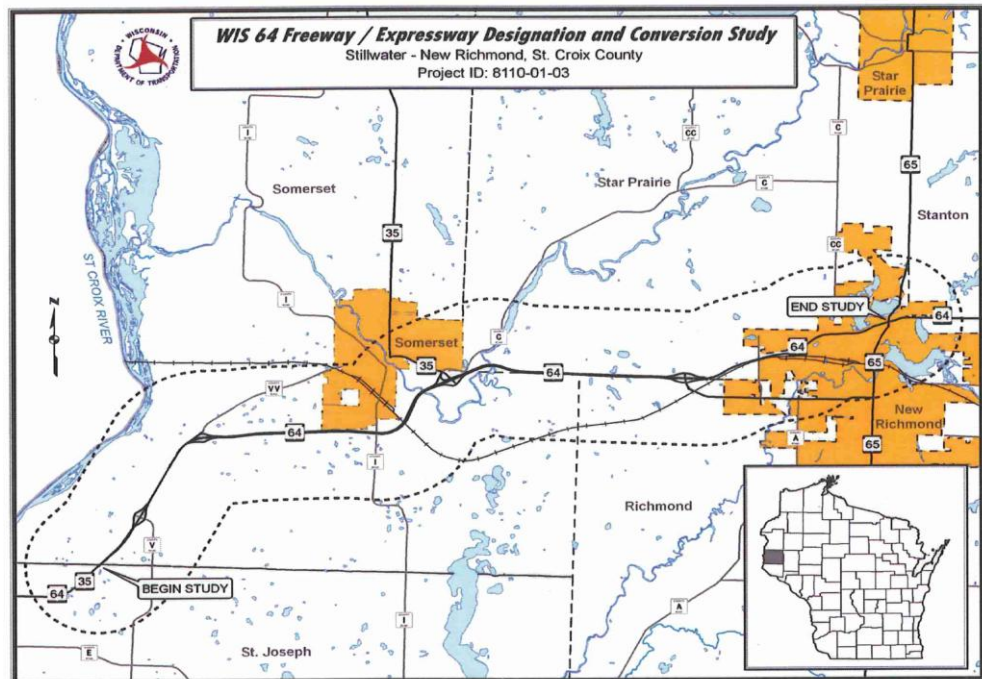
The project's environmental assessment was completed in 2004. The study recommends realigning US 63 to the east of the Village of Baldwin with a four-lane, limited access divided highway north of Baldwin.

### ***WIS 65 (I-94 to Paperjack St.) Environmental Assessment***

WIS 65 connects the cities of River Falls and New Richmond, and is another state highway in the high growth area of western St. Croix County which is under study for potential expansion. This study recommends corridor preservation in the study area which includes an alignment to the east of the Village of Roberts. For the section north of Roberts to the south side of New Richmond, the EA recommends an on-alignment, four-lane enhanced expressway.

### ***WIS 64 Freeway/Expressway Designation Study***

WisDOT, Northwest Region, has initiated a planning and preservation project with the intent of designating a segment of STH 64 from Houlton to New Richmond as a freeway/expressway under Wisconsin Statute §84.295. This designation is a planning action to identify the required improvements and associated right-of-way needs to convert the facility to a freeway and expressway. This



designation is also a preservation action where official mapping under Wisconsin Statute §84.295(10) is used to preserve those right-of-way needs for the physical conversion of the highway to a freeway. The actual conversion is not expected to take place for another 10, 15 or more years. An Environmental Assessment (EA) will also be prepared for the project. As part of the project, future right-of-way needs to remove or convert the existing at-grade intersections to grade separation and provide local road connections to existing interchanges will be studied. This project is expected to be completed by July 2011. The study area is depicted in the map above.

### ***Designated Truck Routes/Agricultural Equipment***

Truck routes are designed to accommodate semi-trucks and include roadside accommodations at rest areas for temporary parking. Long truck routes also often include private truck parking and fueling stations along the routes.

The following highways are designated as long truck routes in St. Croix County:

- Interstate 94 (all)
- US 63 (all)
- WIS 35 (River Falls to Hudson)

- WIS 64 (New Richmond to east)
- WIS 65 (River Falls to New Richmond)
- WIS 128 (WIS 29 to WIS 170/Glenwood City)
- WIS 170 (WIS 128 to Boyceville)

These additional highways, or portions thereof, are restricted truck routes, such as US 12, WIS 29, and parts of WIS 35, 64, 65, 79, and 128. No County highways are designated truck routes.

Agricultural equipment for farming needs to utilize state, county and town roads to access fields. Operating farm vehicles on Wisconsin roads involves a specific set of regulations, safety and other requirements. Specific rules regarding length, height and width of agricultural equipment; driver requirements; hazardous materials; safety and vehicle registration; and weight restrictions can be found on the WisDOT website at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/statepatrol/inspection/farm.htm>.

Farmers are not exempt from highway weight restrictions except during harvest time. Wisconsin Statutes §348.17(5) annually lifts weight limits on Class A highways from September 1 to November 30 to harvest corn, soybeans, potatoes, vegetables or cranberries. The law allows weight limits to be exceeded by up to 15 percent for transport from farm field to initial storage or initial processing point. Farmers must meet all other vehicle requirements for size, operation and driver qualifications, and cannot travel on roadways or bridges with special weight restrictions or on most interstates.

Equipment operators are encouraged to drive in a courteous, law-abiding manner and respect local weight limits whenever possible. Non-agricultural vehicle operators are encouraged to respect agriculture's right to utilize roadways, follow safe passing signs and also drive in a courteous and law-abiding manner. Farm-equipment signage for areas with the greatest use would be helpful in warning vehicles of possible slow-moving or parked equipment on highways. Education and information access are also important.

## Bridges

There are over 280 bridges in St. Croix County. WisDOT generally defines a bridge as any structure spanning 20 feet or more that carries motor vehicle traffic. Of these bridges, 100 are under State ownership and maintenance, 62 are owned by the County, and 122 are under local ownership (See Figure 4.10).

State and local bridges are inspected at least once every two years. WisDOT is responsible for inspections of all bridges along the state highway system. Municipalities handle inspections for bridges along the local roadway system. WisDOT and local governments follow federal guidelines in their bridge inspection and maintenance procedures. Bridges are rated and categorized in terms of their functional and structural situation.

Functionally obsolete is an engineering term frequently used to describe older bridges that no longer meet modern geometric standards. For example, it could refer to a bridge with narrow lanes or shoulders. A bridge classified as functionally obsolete does not mean the bridge is unsafe for public travel. Structurally deficient is an engineering term used to describe a bridge with one or more elements that will require attention. The classification does not mean the bridge is unsafe for travel. For example, it could refer to a combination of elements on a bridge such as potholes on a bridge deck or surface rust on metal trusses. These have little to no impact on a bridge's overall safe function. Depending on the extent of the structural deficiency, the bridge may be load-posted until improvements are completed.

In 2008 there were three bridges under state ownership classified as either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, or both, as well as 12 under county or local ownership. A current list of bridges can be found at: <http://nationalbridges.com/> or <http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/dataondemand/33659859.html>.

The St. Croix County Highway Department inspects the bridges and monitors the sufficiency rating of all the bridges on the county and town road systems as the Highway Department has statutory oversight of the County Aid Town Road Bridge Program. Bridges are designed and rehabilitated or replaced on the county and local system when the sufficiency rating, based on bi-annual inspections, qualifies the structure for federal rehabilitation or replacement funding. This results in an average of one or two major bridge projects a year on the county and/or town system.

**FIGURE 4.10 OWNERSHIP OF BRIDGES**

OWNER	NO. OF BRIDGES
State of Wisconsin	100
St. Croix County	62
<b>Towns</b>	
T. Baldwin	6
T. Cady	6
T. Cylon	8
T. Eau Galle	10
T. Emerald	14
T. Erin Prairie	9
T. Forest	5
T. Glenwood	8
T. Hammond	10
T. Hudson	2
T. Kinnickinnic	8
T. Pleasant Valley	1
T. Richmond	9
T. Rush River	5
T. St. Joseph	0
T. Somerset	0
T. Springfield	3
T. Stanton	0
T. Star Prairie	1
T. Troy	1
T. Warren	1
<b>Villages</b>	
V. Baldwin	3
V. Deer Park	0
V. Hammond	0
V. North Hudson	0
V. Roberts	0
V. Somerset	1
V. Spring Valley*	0
V. Star Prairie	0
V. Wilson	0
V. Woodville	2
<b>Cities</b>	
C. Glenwood City	0
C. Hudson	4
C. New Richmond	1
C. River Falls*	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>

source: St. Croix County Highway Dept.

### ***Rustic Roads System***

The Rustic Roads System in Wisconsin was created by the 1973 state legislature to help citizens and local units of government preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads for the leisurely enjoyment of bikers, hikers and motorists. Unique brown and yellow signs mark the routes of all officially designated Rustic Roads. These routes provide bikers, hikers and motorists with an opportunity to casually travel through some of Wisconsin's scenic countryside. All Rustic Roads remain under local jurisdiction and are eligible for the same state aid as other public highways.

There are four rustic roads in St. Croix County (See Figure 4.11). Two (#3 and #4) are in the Glen Hills area south of Glenwood City and north of Wilson. Rustic Road #3 follows the western edge of the wooded Glen Hills County Park and area farmland for 3.6 miles. Rustic Road #4 borders the east side of the County Park for 4.6 miles.



Officially Designated Rustic Road Sign

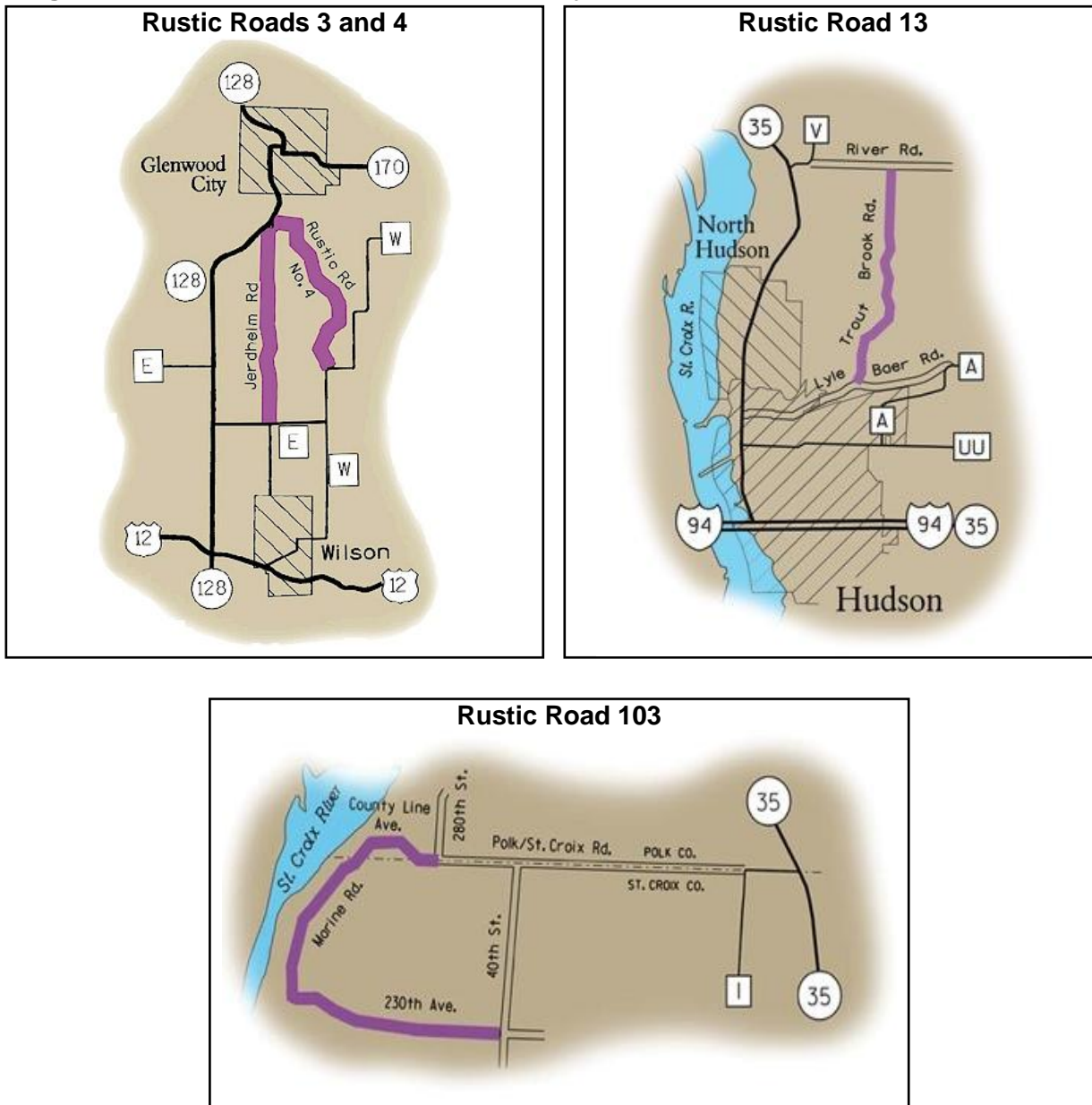
St. Croix County's third designated Rustic Road (#13) passes through hilly terrain across the scenic Willow River. This route meanders along Trout Brook Road for three miles through heavily wooded areas and past several artesian wells.

St. Croix County's fourth designated Rustic Road (#103), travels 2.8 miles through St. Croix and Polk counties. It includes portions of 230th Avenue, Marine Road, County Line Avenue and Polk/St. Croix Road through the Town of Somerset in St. Croix County and the Town of Farmington in Polk County. This route leads to the historic Somerset Landing - a river access point in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway that features a boat launch and other amenities. R-103 features sandstone bluff outcroppings, tree canopies, and prairie and farm views. A snowmobile route crosses Polk/St. Croix Road and a marked bike route connects to R-103 at 40th Street. Additional information is available on the following website:

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/rusticroads.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/rusticroads.htm).



Figure 4.11 Rustic Roads in St. Croix County



source: WisDOT travel information website



## Access Management

Access management includes planning the number and location of driveways on roadways. This practice helps maintain safe and efficient traffic movement on roadways, and access to and from property, particularly in more urban areas. Road function and safety increase as the number of access points decrease.

WisDOT employs five types of access control authorized by state statutes. They are referred to as Wisconsin Statutes (Wis. Stats.) 84.09, 84.25, 84.29, 84.295 and 86.07. A short summary of the state statutes follows, but it should be noted that the actual content of the statutes is significantly more detailed, and many special conditions and provisions are not included in this text. The type of access control that is imposed on various highway road segments influences how that segment is managed.

- Wis. Stats. 84.09 (purchase access control) – WisDOT acquires land by gift, devise, purchase or condemnation to establish, extend or improve transportation facilities.
- Wis. Stats. 84.25 (administrative access control) – WisDOT designates some rural portions of the state trunk highway system as controlled-access highways where studies show that the potential exists for traffic volumes to exceed 2,000 vehicles per 24-hour day.
- Wis. Stats. 84.29 (interstate control) – WisDOT designates highways as interstates with Federal Highway concurrence.
- Wis. Stats. 84.295 (freeway and expressway access control) – WisDOT designates highways with greater than 4,000 vehicles per day as freeways or expressways when it is determined that the volume and character of traffic warrants the construction or acquisition of right-of-way to accommodate a four-lane highway.
- Wis. Stats 86.07 (driveway permitting) – WisDOT requires permits for work on any right-of-way or other access to a state highway.

Access control is in effect on all state and federal highways in St. Croix County. WIS 64 from the St. Croix River to STH 65 in New Richmond has Wis. Stats. 84.09 access control in effect. WIS 64 is constructed to freeway standards (no access except via grade separated interchanges) from 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue (St. Joseph/Somerset town line) to WIS 35 in Somerset. From WIS 35 to WIS 65, WIS 64 is constructed to expressway standards; access is only available at public road intersections.

It is planned to designate WIS 64 from the new Stillwater Bridge location to 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a freeway under Wis. Stats. 84.295 as part of the bridge approach project. In addition, it is planned to designate WIS 64 from 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 110<sup>th</sup> Street in the Town of Star Prairie as a freeway and from 110<sup>th</sup> Street to WIS 65 as an expressway; these designations are expected to take place in the next two to four years.

## Bicycling

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the [St. Croix County Parks and Recreation Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) was adopted, which discusses potential bicycle route and trail improvements. Figure 4.12 is the bicycling suitability map from this plan; suitability is based on traffic volumes and pavement width including shoulders. Traffic volume data for all town and county roads is not available, though most rural, paved roads without such data are safe biking facilities due to low traffic volumes. Off-road trails are identified and discussed in the Utility and Community Facilities element of this plan.

The Plan's recommended bicycle system focuses on the unincorporated areas of the County, though local municipal plans were considered. Please see Appendix B of the Plan if information on

these local plans is needed. The Plan also reviews and reflects State plans, State suitability ratings, regional connecting trails/routes, and the proposed St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail. Recommendations from the *St. Croix County Bicycle Transportation Plan* (1995) and [County Outdoor Recreation Plan \(2006\)](#) were also considered.

### ***Pedestrian Facilities***

As its name suggests, the *St. Croix County Parks and Recreation Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* identifies many trails and on-road routes which are also appropriate for pedestrian use in the County, though much of the analysis focused on bicycling.

Pedestrian facilities exist, at varying levels, within the incorporated communities of St. Croix County. While some cities and villages have a fairly consistent network of sidewalks, at least in the older sections, some other cities and villages tend to have sidewalks in their downtown commercial areas, with some connections to residential or in school areas, but not throughout the community.

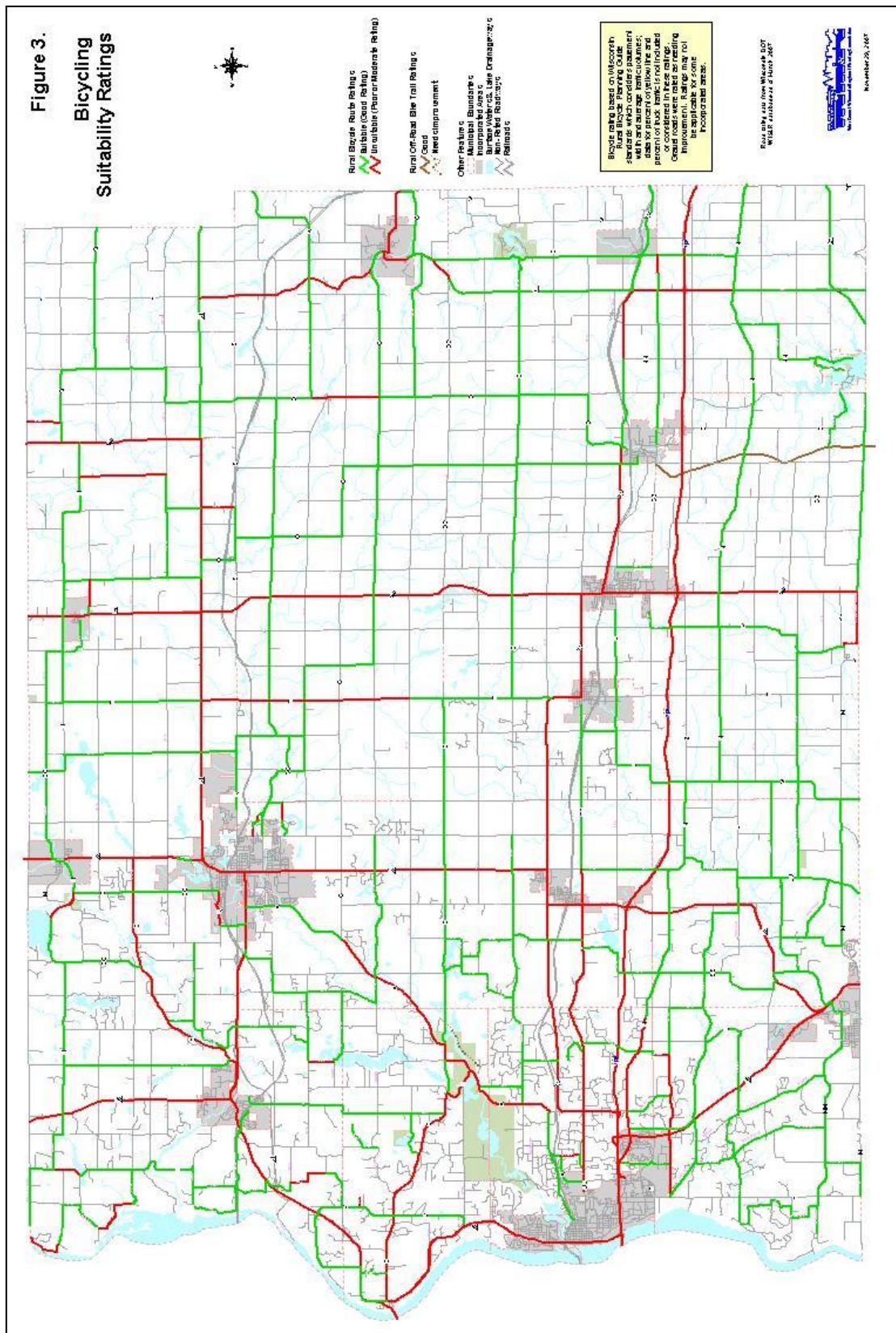
All cities and villages within St. Croix County have to address the need for pedestrians to safely cross state or county highways. All incorporated communities currently have a State highway which passes through their communities. With increasing traffic volumes on most of these highways, the potential for pedestrian-vehicle accidents is increasing. These highways and, in the case of the City of Hudson, Interstate 94 can be barriers to the movement of pedestrian traffic from residential to commercial areas or other destinations.

It is common for new school buildings to be built on the outskirts of communities, where land is more plentiful and less expensive, but it may be difficult or dangerous for students to walk or bike to school. The traffic at school arrival and dismissal times worsens the problem.

As discussed in other parts of this section, there are numerous transportation projects planned or proposed for St. Croix County, including new highway bypasses which will impact pedestrian traffic. Some communities in the County, such as the City of New Richmond, have adopted pedestrian or sidewalk plans. Pedestrian facilities are more often addressed by communities in a less-comprehensive fashion as part of their subdivision design process or outdoor recreation planning.

A federal program, Safe Routes to School, is available to assist communities with planning, infrastructure improvements, enforcement, and education to make walking and biking to school safer, and to encourage students to do so.

Figure 4.12 Bicycling Suitability Ratings St. Croix County



## Safety

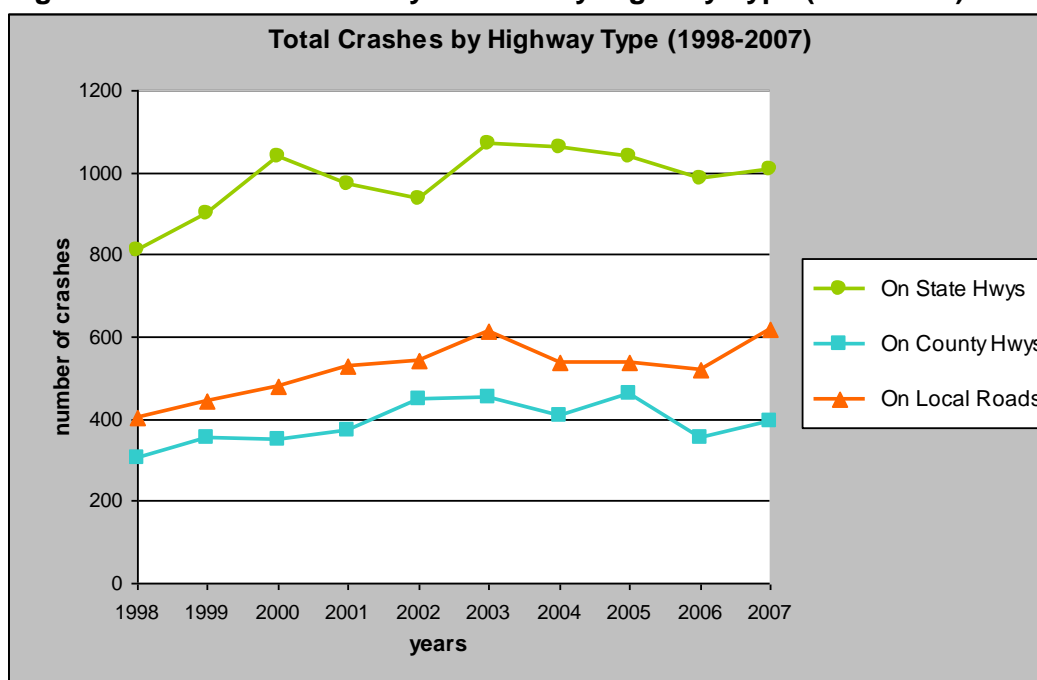
Along with the significant increase in traffic volumes over the past 10 years, St. Croix County has also experienced increases in reported crashes. Crashes are up nearly 33 percent, overall, though injuries and fatalities have remained relatively constant (see Figure 4.13 and 4.14). Crashes on local roads have increased most dramatically, approximately 53 percent from 1998 to 2007. This may be due to the increase in numbers of vehicles on local roads with limited capacity. It should be noted that crashes on state and federal highways have steadily declined since 2003. The number of reported crashes involving bicycles or pedestrians is small, making trending difficult. It is generally accepted that the actual occurrence of bicycle and pedestrian crashes far outnumbers those that are reported. The annual count of crashes for municipalities in the County, from 2003 to 2007, is shown on Figure 4.15.

**FIGURE 4.13 – ST. CROIX COUNTY CRASH HISTORY 1998-2007**

DATA ITEM	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All Crashes	1520	1701	1868	1871	1924	2137	2006	2037	1858	2022
On State Hwys	810	902	1037	970	936	1072	1062	1038	983	1008
On County Hwys	305	354	351	373	446	453	407	461	354	394
On Local Roads	405	445	480	528	542	612	537	538	521	620
Total Injuries	682	670	821	773	658	689	712	668	631	658
Total Fatalities	20	15	18	16	20	20	15	12	10	17
Bicycle Crashes	6	7	9	2	3	5	9	8	9	4
Pedestrian Crashes	15	5	7	9	13	7	12	12	8	6

source: Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory; WisTransPortal Crash Database; Crash Data Retrieval Facility, Version 1.1.3, July 16, 2008.

**Figure 4.14 – St. Croix County Crashes by Highway Type (1998-2007)**



source: Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory; WisTransPortal Crash Database; Crash Data Retrieval Facility, Version 1.1.3, July 16, 2008.

FIGURE 4.15 – HIGHWAY CRASHES BY MUNICIPALITY

MUNICIPALITY	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Towns</b>					
Baldwin	66	44	52	47	70
Cady	83	72	77	65	76
Cylon	37	34	53	44	40
Eau Galle	101	76	75	92	69
Emerald	27	26	27	34	36
Erin Prairie	41	28	42	27	31
Forest	29	15	25	25	18
Glenwood	25	35	36	36	40
Hammond	47	31	37	38	48
Hudson	175	193	188	151	190
Kinnickinnic	57	69	62	72	72
Pleasant Valley	43	32	37	25	35
Richmond	75	69	68	61	60
Rush River	32	44	41	41	27
Somerset	130	118	117	133	145
Springfield	58	42	61	50	25
Stanton	56	40	38	39	49
Star Prairie	59	91	79	74	58
St. Joseph	142	126	137	124	117
Troy	110	100	87	90	76
Warren	100	90	84	70	89
<b>Villages</b>					
Baldwin	52	50	53	43	53
Deer Park	0	0	2	0	0
Hammond	11	12	11	5	11
North Hudson	18		26	19	16
Roberts	4	11	8	8	20
Somerset	26	7	27	14	8
Spring Valley*	0	24	0	0	0
Star Prairie	3	0	5	1	4
Wilson	4	5	1	4	3
Woodville	9	0	6	4	6
<b>Cities</b>					
Glenwood City	20	13	5	9	12
Hudson	331	338	282	247	294
New Richmond	106	107	68120	112	144
River Falls*	60	62	68	54	80
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2137</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2037</b>	<b>1858</b>	<b>2022</b>

source: Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory; WisTransPortal Crash Database; Crash Data Retrieval Facility, Version 1.1.3, July 16, 2008.



## Transit

There are several specialized transportation services for the elderly and disabled available in St. Croix County that are supported by public funding and some that are supported through private pay.

The St. Croix County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) coordinate several demand-responsive specialized transportation services utilizing their site transportation vans and using volunteers to provide transport.

There are programs in St. Croix County that provide subsidized transportation services to medical appointments. The Volunteer Medical Transportation program provides door-to-door trips to medical appointments for people age 60 and over. In 2008 there were 520 one-way trips, in 2005 there were 542.

Interfaith Volunteers of St. Croix County, a private, non-profit organization, collaborates with the ADRC to provide transportation to long-term medical appointments such as dialysis, radiation or chemotherapy, other therapies and long-distance medical appointments. Volunteers also help those over age 60, who want to continue to live in their own homes, to complete daily needs such as grocery shopping. Each month volunteers serve an average of 25 people on 65 one-way trips for about 4,500 miles. Destinations include Amery, Stillwater, Menomonie, Maplewood, St. Paul and local communities.

The ADRC is participating in a multi-county collaborative effort working with the New Freedom Transportation Program administered by the Center for Independent Living in Western Wisconsin based in Menomonie. The program provides volunteer-based, transportation to people with disabilities of all ages. Forty-eight hour advance notice is required but wheel-chair accessible vans are not available. In 2008, 678 one-way trips were provided.

The Specialized Van Transportation program provides transportation to people age 60 and older and to those with disabilities or the spouses of either. The general public may ride on a space-available basis. The vans provide transportation to local senior centers/nutrition sites, medical, employment, shopping and social destinations within each community. The vans in four communities are handicapped accessible. Days and times of van service vary by community. Requests for service are made by contacting the senior center in each community that the van is located. Requests must be made 24-48 hours in advance.

**FIGURE 4.16 -- VAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO NUTRITION SITES 2005 & 2008 ST. CROIX COUNTY**

COMMUNITY	FLEET VEHICLE	ONE-WAY TRIPS	
		2005	2008
<b>Cities/Villages</b>			
Glenwood City	Mini-bus: 14, Mini-van: 4 + 1 wheelchair	2134	2108
Hudson	Bus: 12 + 1 wheelchair	3796	4300
New Richmond	Bus: 12 + 1 wheelchair	9068	3668
Baldwin	Mini-bus: 8 + 1 wheelchair	1774	1564
Deer Park	2 Mini-vans: 7 each	14	283
Hammond/Roberts	Mini-van: 6	450	993
Somerset	Mini-van: 14	2260	1042
Woodville	Mini-van: 7	2784	2950
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22,280</b>	<b>16,908</b>

The 2008 total number of one-way trips to nutrition sites/senior centers by the Specialized Van Transportation program was 16,908. This is down from 22,280 in 2005. The decrease is reflective of the changing demographics of seniors. More senior citizens are receiving home-delivered meals than are traveling to nutrition sites due to health concerns. This trend is occurring state-wide. The trips per community nutrition site break down as shown in Figure 4.16.

source: St. Croix County Aging and Disability Resource Center

St. Croix County contributes to the support of two shared-ride taxi services that are subsidized by state and federal funding. Both have lift-equipped vans and provide door-to-door service. The River Falls Shared-Ride Taxi Service provides rides within the city limits. It is a combination of public and private pay and is available to elderly and disabled consumers. 10,304 one-way trips were given to St. Croix County residents in 2008. In 2005, annual one-way rides were approximately 7,869 in St. Croix County.

The City of New Richmond sponsors a shared-ride taxi service that operates within and up to 1½ miles outside of the city limits, which includes portions of the towns of Richmond, Erin Prairie, Stanton and Star Prairie. It is available for elderly and disabled consumers through a combination of public and private pay. The service used to travel up to five miles outside the city, but the distance was reduced in 2006 to improve service and manage costs. The taxi service provided the following number of passenger trips: 9,747 in 2004; 11,011 in 2005; 11,327 in 2006; 12,763 in 2007 and 11,835 in 2008.

Another service available in St. Croix County is the New Richmond Transport Service that provides non-emergency transport between local communities such as Baldwin, Hudson, New Richmond, River Falls, Minneapolis-St. Paul and neighboring counties. The service is for both disabled and nondisabled people to medical and any other trip destinations on a scheduled basis only. This service is available to anyone for private pay and through other funding options, such as Medicaid. The number of trips is limited due to the number of vans and the number of calls in an area.

The growing elderly population in St. Croix County will continue to place increasing demands on specialized transportation services.

Other private transit services for specific purposes or populations do exist in the County. St. Croix Industries provides fixed route and special event transportation for their program participants. Hudson Hospital offers demand responsive service to clients within 15 minutes of the hospital. Baldwin Care Center and Park View Home in Woodville also offer transportation for their residents.

### ***St. Croix River Crossing Project Transit Feasibility Study June 2008***

As part of the process for preparing the St. Croix River Crossing Project Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement, a St. Croix Valley land use/transit workshop was held for project stakeholders on December 13, 2004 in Stillwater, Minnesota. The workshop focused on the viability of a transit market adjacent to the project area in response to the concern of stakeholders that the Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) strategies alone could not meet the purpose and need of the project. Workshop attendees resolved that a transit feasibility study was needed to determine transit goals and objectives and to examine transit markets (including non-traditional transit services) in western Wisconsin. The workshop identified eight items that needed to be further evaluated.

Following this workshop, an Action Plan was created to prepare a transit feasibility study, and an Oversight Committee was formed to implement the study. The study's purpose was to explore the eight items identified in the workshop as requiring further evaluation, including, bi-state transit planning, operations, authority, jurisdiction, and impediments to transit services. The study specifically investigated the feasibility of offering express buses, park-and-ride services, shared-ride taxis, dial-a-ride services, and other transit modalities for western Wisconsin.

In addition, the study conducted research on other bi-state transit operations and concluded that the system used in St. Louis, Missouri/East St. Louis, Illinois, would be the most appropriate for the St. Croix River Crossing Project area cities in western Wisconsin because of the demographic and geographic similarities between the two regions. Within that system, the cities of St. Louis and East St. Louis have created a bi-state transit authority that acts as the jurisdictional agency overseeing a revenue agreement between the two cities by which the smaller entity remits funds to the larger

entity for transit services provided. This funding model was of interest to the Oversight Committee in that the handling of operating revenue by taxing district boundaries in Wisconsin has been identified as a significant impediment to establishing a bi-state transit system.

The study recognizes that the planning of transit services begins with an assessment of market area types within the target communities, and identifies the majority of western Wisconsin's target communities as market area Type IV. This means they are rural areas, which are typically more difficult to serve with transit, as compared to Type I communities, which are central or urban and are easier to accommodate. The study further notes, that an effective transit system should include routes no longer than 30 to 45 minutes and no more than 30 miles in length. However, it was determined that trips from western Wisconsin to Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota are beyond these measures, and therefore make the prospect of transit travel less desirable, both from a ridership perspective and from an operating perspective. In its assessment of the Wisconsin transit market, the study points out that the potential for transit services is limited for reasons that include low population densities and long distances between destinations. It was further recognized that even with rapid commercial, residential, and infrastructure development in western Wisconsin, intra-Wisconsin transit in the form of regular route service would not be feasible under the existing regional transit market area standards. In considering the possibility of creating short-term, express-bus corridors between western Wisconsin and the Twin Cities metro area, the study analyzed newer research datasets. From this data, it appears that the corridor along I-94 is the only one in western Wisconsin with enough potential ridership to downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul to support peak-only express-bus service; however, a feasibility study would need to be undertaken to substantiate this.

With regard to creating a long-term transit corridor between western Wisconsin and the Twin Cities, the study cites the City of Hudson (Wisconsin), as having the most potential as a long-term sustainable transit market. The city might be able to support park-and-ride operations and other transit advantages, such as bus-only shoulders. The consideration of Hudson as a viable candidate for long-term transit corridor would depend largely on the size and stability of its commuting population.

In considering the needs for transit service from western Wisconsin to the Twin Cities metro area, the study found that while a commuter-oriented transit market may exist in Wisconsin, if growth tends continue as anticipated, addressing unmet transit demand from some Minnesota collar counties would remain a higher priority than expanding transit service outside the state. This suggests that western Wisconsin's moderate transit demands may be adequately addressed at this time through current and expanding in-place facilities and services. Expanded park-and-ride facilities in Minnesota's east metro area will continue to benefit Wisconsin residents using the current transit system, and removing vehicles from congested roads in the east metro area. Added bus trips and new bus service within the Twin Cities metro area and collar counties will also provide new options to commuters; however, it should be noted that direct service into western Wisconsin is not included in the current expansion plans for Minnesota's Metro Transit service. The study further suggests that the need for intra-Wisconsin transit travel should continue to be fulfilled by local programs that are tailored to each community and are funded by federal, state, and local sources. These local transit services may include those provided by such organizations as the St. Croix Aging and Disability Resource Center, and the St. Croix County and River Falls share-ride taxis.

The study concludes that the next step in determining the feasibility of new transit service from western Wisconsin into the Twin Cities metro area would be the assembly of a steering committee consisting of representatives from the major cities, counties, federal agencies, state agencies, and planning organizations. The purpose of the steering committee would be to further evaluate the most viable transit services identified in this study, such as express buses with transit advantages

along the I-94 corridor. This study suggests that the steering committee initiate a bus feasibility study specific to the I-94 corridor that would determine potential market, capital costs, operating costs and ideal park-and-ride locations. It is suggested that the committee work with legislators from both Minnesota and Wisconsin to address transit policy and funding issues, and in particular, to identify funding sources for the establishment of a new transit service operating across jurisdictional and state boundaries.

## Commuter Services

Metro Transit maintains a database of individuals who work in the region and have expressed a desire to commute to work or events via carpool or vanpool. This commuter database uses a person's home address, work address and work hours to find others who live and work near them and who have similar schedules or interests. Their web site is: [www.metrotransit.org/rideshare](http://www.metrotransit.org/rideshare).

An intercity bus service, Jefferson Lines, began on July 17, 2008, between Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with intermediate stops in Hudson, Menomonie, Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, Stanley, Abbotsford, Wausau, Wittenberg, Shawano, Green Bay, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan. The service runs once in each direction daily, and allows for connections with Greyhound Lines from Eau Claire to Tomah and Madison, and from Green Bay to Appleton, Oshkosh, and Fond du Lac. It stops at the Carmichael Road Park & Ride lot twice a day, eastbound in the morning and westbound, late afternoon. The service is initially being funded by a federal grant through the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program (STRAP), received by the City of Stanley.

Existing park and ride lots for cars and van pools are located to provide connections for commuter transit to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. The continued growth of the St. Croix County commuting work force warrants investigation of whether additional park and ride lots are needed and where they should be located.

Park and ride lots in St. Croix County are described in Figure 4.17. All lots maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation have security lights. The lot at I-94/STH 65 (Roberts) will be expanded to 114 stalls in late summer/early fall of 2013. The City of New Richmond maintains a parking lot east of the airport entrance on STH 65, at the north end of the city. The lot has a security light.

**FIGURE 4.17 - CAR AND VAN POOL LOTS – 2009  
ST. CROIX COUNTY**

LOT	# PAVED STALLS
STH 65/Airport (New Richmond)	30
I-94 Carmichael Road Interchange (Hudson)	168
Hanley Road /Old Hwy. 35 (Hudson)	74
STH 35/65 (River Falls)	124
I-94/STH 65 Interchange (Roberts)	48
I-94/USH 63 Interchange (Baldwin)	36
USH 63/STH 64 East Intersection (Cylon 4-Corners)	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>

*source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation*

### Commuting Patterns

**FIGURE 4.18 - COMMUTING PATTERNS OF ST. CROIX COUNTY RESIDENTS 1990 TO 2000  
BY PLACE OF WORK**

PLACE OF WORK	1990	% OF TOTAL	2000	% OF TOTAL	CHANGE 1990-2000
<b>Minnesota Counties:</b>					
Dakota	549	2.17%	1,025	2.99%	476
Hennepin	1,590	6.27%	2,869	8.38%	1,279
Ramsey	4,261	16.81%	5,173	15.11%	912
Washington	3,302	13.03%	5,245	15.32%	1,943
All Others	238	0.94%	649	1.90%	411
<b>Wisconsin Counties</b>					
Dunn	238	0.94%	306	0.89%	68
Pierce	857	3.38%	1,272	3.71%	415
Polk	359	1.42%	658	1.92%	299
All Others	244	0.96%	368	1.07%	124
Other States	103	0.41%	102	0.30%	-1
<b>Subtotal Outgoing Commuters</b>	<b>11,741</b>	<b>46.28%</b>	<b>17,667</b>	<b>51.59%</b>	<b>5,926</b>
<b>St. Croix County</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>53.68%</b>	<b>16,579</b>	<b>48.41%</b>	<b>2,973</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,347</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>34,246</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>8,899</b>

source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

**FIGURE 4.19 COMMUTERS TO ST. CROIX COUNTY – 1990 TO 2000  
BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE**

PLACE OF RESIDENCE	1990	% OF TOTAL	2000	% OF TOTAL	CHANGE 1990-2000
<b>Minnesota Counties:</b>					
Dakota	75	0.40%	244	0.94%	169
Hennepin	124	0.67%	424	1.63%	300
Ramsey	310	1.66%	524	2.02%	214
Washington	590	3.17%	958	3.68%	368
All Others	179	0.96%	581	2.23%	402
<b>Wisconsin Counties</b>					
Dunn	697	3.74%	1,347	5.18%	650
Pierce	1,836	9.86%	3,154	12.13%	1,318
Polk	842	4.52%	1,542	5.93%	700
All Others	300	1.61%	539	2.07%	239
Other States	68	0.37%	107	0.41%	39
<b>Subtotal Incoming Commuters</b>	<b>5,021</b>	<b>26.96%</b>	<b>9,420</b>	<b>36.23%</b>	<b>4,399</b>
<b>St. Croix County</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>73.04%</b>	<b>16,579</b>	<b>63.77%</b>	<b>2,973</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,627</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25,999</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,372</b>

source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

- St. Croix County residents are commuting to jobs outside the county in steadily increasing numbers.
- The number of residents commuting to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has increased by slightly over 5,900 residents since 1990.
- In 2000, there were more residents working outside St. Croix County than inside.



From 1990 to 2000, St. Croix County added over 7,000 new jobs within the county. However county residents fill less than half of those jobs. Workers from outside St. Croix County fill over 4,000 of those jobs.

Residents of St. Croix County are employed in a wide array of locations, within their own community, elsewhere in the County, and in other Wisconsin and Minnesota counties (See Figures 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20). Of the 34,428 employed residents reported, 18.7 percent work in the city, village, or town in which they reside. This would include those that work at home, and most of those working family farms. Just less than 30 percent of workers reported that they work in a St. Croix County community other than the one in which they reside. Those working in other Wisconsin counties include 7.6 percent of employed St. Croix County residents, with Eau Claire employing the highest percent, at 3.7 percent. The most significant statistic is that 43.5 percent of working St. Croix County residents commute to a job in Minnesota. Most of those are employed in Washington and Ramsey counties, 15.2 and 15.0 percent, respectively.

FIGURE 4.20 – COMMUTING PATTERNS OF ST. CROIX COUNTY RESIDENTS BY MUNICIPALITY

	DESTINATIONS OF COMMUTERS															
		OTHER WISCONSIN COUNTIES							MINNESOTA COUNTIES							
COMMUTERS' ORIGIN	HOME COMMUNITY	ST CROIX COUNTY														TOTAL COMMUTERS
			BARRON	DUNN	EAU CLAIRE	PIERCE	POLK	OTHER	ANOKA	DAKOTA	GOODHUE	HENNEPIN	RAMSEY	WASHINGTON	OTHER	
Towns																
Baldwin	144	240		4	2	15	2			5		27	37	34	11	521
Cady	96	119	2	51	8	56				4		23	32	18	2	411
Cylon	48	152	3				45	5	3	7	2	6	26	28	2	327
Eau Galle	77	236		12	6	41	2	4	2	17	3	16	43	40	1	510
Emerald	68	214		4		6	23		2		2	13	27	24	8	391
Erin Prairie	47	195					14		6	4		14	33	67	7	387
Forest	92	90	8	15		2	49	2	2	7	2	9	18	27	3	326
Glenwood	75	205	2	28		6	14			4		8	16	14	2	374
Hammond	88	256	2	2		20	9	5	1	22	3	17	75	40	4	544
Hudson	424	1091	2	19	3	35	18	12	23	182	14	444	750	567	50	3634
Kinnickinnic	65	236			2	136			2	13	3	66	100	123	13	759
Pleasant Valley	45	86		2		23			2	9	2	6	20	21	1	217
Richmond	80	394	9	5	4	25	32	7		26		62	90	143	5	882
Rush River	51	130			2	8				20		9	32	17	21	290
St Joseph	203	413				11	23		39	37		262	383	494	18	1883
Somerset	203	342				23	46	8	2	37		89	246	454	50	1500
Springfield	61	229	2	46	6	6		2	3	5		21	31	20	7	439
Stanton	53	330				4	27	6	5	18		24	38	71	2	578
Star Prairie	63	689				6	86	10	15	26		75	231	359	15	1575
Troy	231	628				189		7	18	14		257	485	219		2048
Warren	107	251	2	4	2	23	5	6		35	5	59	138	117	9	763
Villages																
Baldwin	420	536	4	25	13	30	11	12	3	20	12	62	113	106	19	1386
Deer Park	15	50	2			3	47		4			9	8	11	3	152
Hammond	93	310	2	12	7	26	4		2	24		20	75	45	2	622
N. Hudson	157	677				29	6		17	84		224	436	388	17	2035
Roberts	64	205	4		6	11	2		2	42		46	89	80	27	578
Somerset	144	162	3		6	4	25	1	8	13		63	103	233	10	775
Star Prairie	34	102	2			2	30	5	2			15	29	52	4	277
Wilson	18	48		15	2	9							5	9	5	111
Woodville	157	231	3	6	4	10	4	2		8		31	41	38	8	543
Cities																
Glenwood	182	203	4	45	5	6	18	5		5		13	42	22	4	554
Hudson	1320	502		11	15	94	19	47	19	249	17	688	891	755	35	4662
New Richmond	1238	541	11		14	75	95	39	39	47	9	121	397	501	37	3164
River Falls	279	224			8	338	2	1		41	18	70	93	108	28	1210
Totals	6442	10317	67	306	115	1272	658	186	221	1025	92	2869	5173	5245	440	34,428

## Railroads

Rail service is an important component of the local economic market. Many industries prefer to have direct access to rail service. Rail service in St. Croix County is provided by two railroads as shown on Figure 4.21.

The Union Pacific (UP) Railroad operates the former Chicago-Northwestern (CNW) mainline between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago. This line travels through the towns of Springfield, Baldwin, Hammond, Warren and Hudson and serves the communities of Hudson, Roberts, Baldwin, Hammond, Woodville and Wilson.

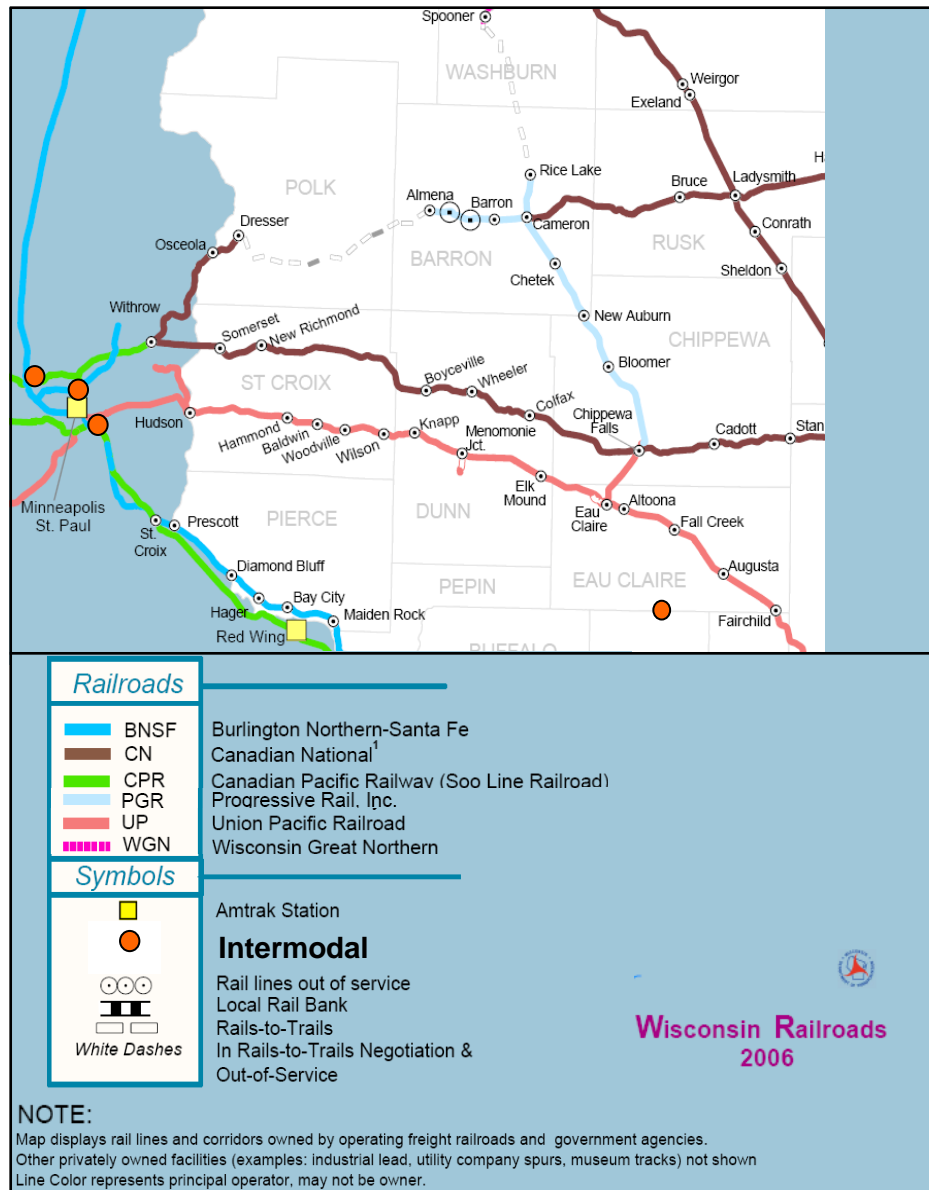
The Canadian National (CN) Railroad operates the former Milwaukee Road/Soo Line, a branch line that provides shipper connections in Minnesota and to the east for the communities of Somerset and New Richmond.

The CP traverses the towns of Glenwood, Emerald, Cylon, Erin Prairie, Star Prairie, Richmond, and Somerset. Utilizing a railroad spur, the train makes one stop in Cylon at the Precision Ag fertilizer plant for freight deliveries on a request basis.

The mainline connections of the UP route between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago will continue to ensure rail service to communities along this route.

The availability of service provided by the regional CP rail line is dependent upon the level of shipping generated by individual communities along this route and by access to larger rail systems to the west and east.

**Figure 4.21 -- Railroad Ownership in West Central Wisconsin**



source: excerpted from "Wisconsin Railroads-2006" map, Bureau of Planning, WisDOT, (January, 2006); and Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report, WisDOT, 2004.

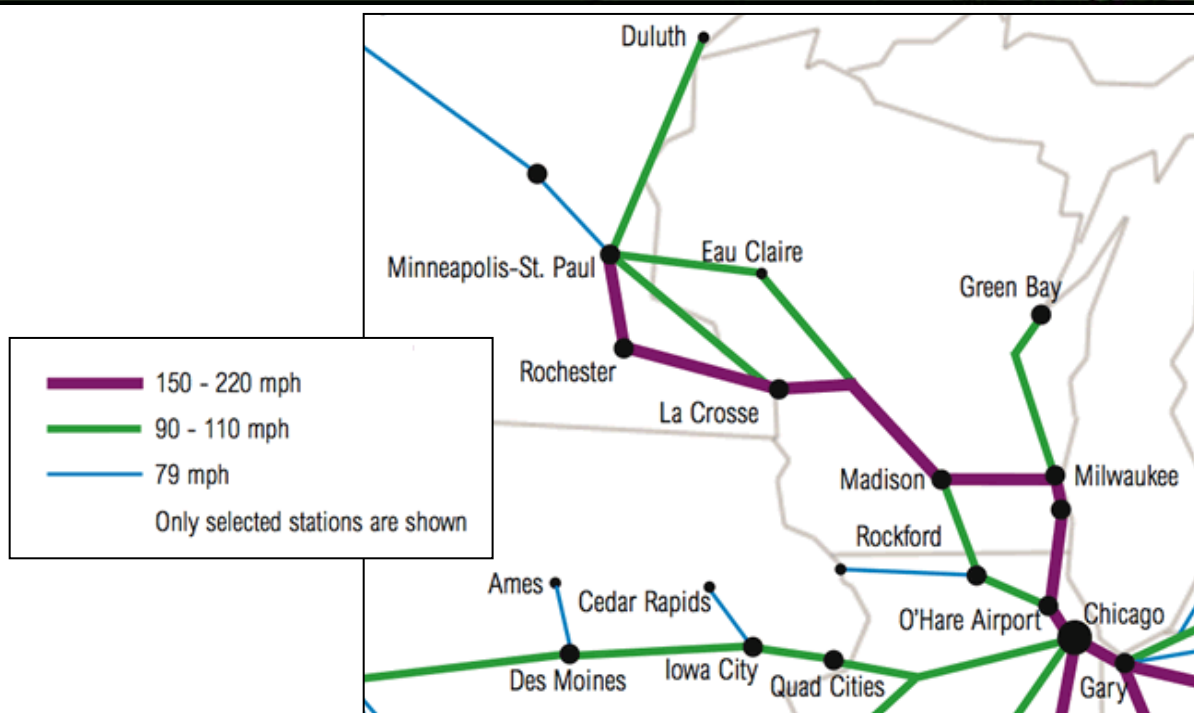
### *Passenger Rail*

No passenger rail service is currently available in St. Croix County. However, a group of local governments and business leaders are working together as the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition to promote passenger rail service between Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago with a route through West Central Wisconsin.

The West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition has been actively pursuing revival of a regional passenger rail route since 1999. Made up of volunteers including business people, government officials, environmentalists, and concerned citizens, the coalition is also a committee of Momentum West, the 10-county Regional Economic Development Organization. The coalition meets monthly, and as needed in working committees. There is also an annual meeting held in the fall. Some major accomplishments to date have been:

- In 2000, efforts resulted in additional state analysis of the economic impact of a West Central Wisconsin route on the Midwest Regional Rail System, a federal initiative that proposes a high-speed passenger rail service for the Midwest with Chicago as the hub.
- In 2001, the state concluded in the Intercity Passenger Rail Corridors Feasibility Study that a West Central Wisconsin route would contribute significant economic impact.
- In 2003, the state's Wisconsin Rail Issues & Opportunities Report stated a West Central Wisconsin route would improve the overall financial performance of the proposed regional rail system.
- In 2005, the City of Eau Claire included passenger rail in its Comprehensive Plan.
- In 2009, the City of Eau Claire included passenger rail in its Sustainability Plan.
- In 2009, the City and County of Eau Claire passed resolutions in support of passenger rail.
- In 2009, State Legislation authorized Eau Claire County to create a Regional Transit Authority (RTA). That legislation was reversed during 2012 and no RTA's are allowed in Wisconsin. This may be reversed again to allow RTA's.
- Now, the coalition is helping to influence the final state transportation plan (Connections 2030) to include studying a West Central Wisconsin route as one of three alternatives in linking Madison with Minneapolis/St. Paul. As stated in the "Provide Mobility and Transportation Choice" chapter of Connections 2030, WisDOT will consider opportunities for expanding intercity passenger rail service to regions not originally included in the Midwest Regional Rail System. Connections 2030 shows maps of two potential routes that WisDOT studied in 2002 that would serve Eau Claire and west-central Wisconsin. See Figure 4.22. Both of these study routes assumed a stop in Menomonie.

Figure 4.22 - West Central Wisconsin Passenger Rail Corridor Options





### ***Air Transportation***

The New Richmond Regional Airport (NRRA) is the only public airport located in St. Croix County and is the fifth largest municipal airport in Wisconsin with two runways, averaging 122 flights per day and about 180 aircraft based in privately-owned hangars. There is a seaplane access with 23 seaplanes in use. There is no scheduled passenger service at this facility; however, there is private charter service available. A number of projects for the New Richmond Regional Airport are included in the WisDOT Airport Improvement Plan 2008-2012. The 2008 construction projects are completed. Land acquisitions have begun or are proposed for the near future.

State statutes allow the City of New Richmond to utilize its zoning ordinance and building code authority to regulate land use, construction standards and structure height in areas within a three-nautical-mile radius from the NRRA. In April 2008 the City of New Richmond adopted a height limitation zoning ordinance and general building standards. The height limitations are elevations permissible above mean-sea-level in feet. Specific information on the height limitation in each zone and the building and construction standards can be found on the NRRA's webpage, <http://www.nrairport.com/buildingcode.htm>.

Six additional airport facilities provide air transportation to St. Croix County. The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport provides the primary scheduled passenger and commercial air services to the county and the region. In St. Croix County a small private airstrip located west of Baldwin is open from May through November. It averages 38 flights per week and is used heavily by parachutists during the summer months. The Lake Elmo airport, located on County Road 15/Manning Avenue three miles from I-94 (approximately 10 miles from Hudson in Minnesota), the Amery Municipal airport, located two miles south of Amery just off STH 46 (approximately 10 miles from Deer Park), the L.O. Simenstad Municipal Airport, located one mile south of Osceola just off STH 35 (approximately 14 miles from Somerset) and the Boyceville Municipal Airport, located on the east side of the Village of Boyceville on STH 170 (approximately eight miles east of Glenwood City) provide private passenger and transport services. There are about 15 private landing strips that are only for personal use located throughout St. Croix County.

### ***Water Transportation***

There is no significant passenger or freight water transportation in St. Croix County. The nearest commercial port is in Duluth-Superior on Lake Superior located approximately 100 miles north and barge traffic does not extend up the St. Croix River from the Mississippi River. Water transportation within the County is primarily recreational in nature (e.g., canoeing, fishing, water-skiing) occurring throughout the County on its many rivers and lakes, with some larger recreational boats and sailboats on Lake St. Croix. Paddlewheel and other riverboat excursions are also available along the St. Croix River for sight-seeing and dinner cruises.

### ***Metropolitan Planning Organization Status***

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is defined in federal transportation legislation and is designated as the local decision-making body that is responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. A metropolitan planning organization is an organization of primarily local elected officials who provide a forum for local decision-making on transportation issues of a regional nature. The federal government requires that an MPO be designated for each urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000 people (i.e. for each Urbanized Area (UZA) defined in the most recent decennial Census).

Based on the 2000 Census, St. Croix and Pierce counties are part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA); there are 13 counties in the MSA. Within the MSA is the central core Urbanized Area (UZA) and the surrounding areas designated as Urban Clusters. An Urban Cluster (UC) is an urban core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contains

between 2,500 and 49,999 people. A UC is based on Census block and block group density and does not coincide with official municipal boundaries. There are four urban clusters within St. Croix County; the City of Hudson, Village of North Hudson and part of the Town of Hudson are included in the Stillwater Area Urban Cluster while the cities of River Falls and New Richmond and Village of Baldwin are stand alone UCs.

The MPO carries out the planning for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) which includes the UZA and the contiguous geographic areas likely to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period covered by the transportation plan. The boundary may encompass the entire MSA.

The Metropolitan Council is the MPO for the Twin Cities MPA, which includes the seven metro counties: Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington, which the Council has jurisdiction over. However the Council has developed Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) for 20 counties in the region, including St. Croix, Pierce and Polk in Wisconsin.

Those portions of St. Croix County in the Stillwater Area UC are not part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul MPA or MPO. There are likely several reasons for this, but most specifically because these areas are located in the State of Wisconsin.

MPO designation must be agreed on by the governor and the units of general purpose local governments that together represent at least 75 percent of the affected population (including the central city or cities as defined by the Bureau of the Census). An MPO is designated by the Wisconsin Secretary of Transportation on behalf of the Governor and is organized pursuant to Sections 62.11(5), 60.28(41), 59.97(1), and 16.54(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes. The MPO acts as the local policy advisory committee pursuant to Section NR 121.05(1)(g)4.b. of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Funding for MPO transportation planning is provided through a combination of federal, state and local funds.

The purpose of an MPO is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive urban transportation planning process that results in plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the Urbanized Area, and thereby satisfies the conditions necessary for the receipt of federal transportation funding for capital, operating, and planning assistance. The MPO develops and adopts an annual work program, and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) listing the transportation projects programmed within the urbanized area for the next five years. The adoption of a long-range transportation/land use plan is also required, with updates every five years, maintaining a 20-year planning horizon. This is usually a multi-modal plan, addressing streets and highways, public transit, specialized transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail, and air transportation.

Each MPO has a policy board that is generally comprised of chief elected officials who represent different parts of the region served by the MPO. This board is advised by a technical committee (typically referred to as a Technical Advisory Committee, or TAC) that consists of planning and engineering staff from jurisdictions within each region.

The TAC develops high quality technical tools and analysis for the region, and advises the MPO policy board on technical and administrative issues related to regional transportation planning. Some MPOs also utilize a citizen advisory committee and other specialized committees to advise the policy board.

After each decennial census the UZA and UC designations are evaluated and reviewed by the Census Bureau. If designated as part of a UZA, a community then has to pursue either designation to a new MPA and MPO or addition to an existing MPA and MPO. If designated as part of a UC a community may pursue MPA and MPO participation. The closest MPO in Wisconsin is the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls MPO that is located in Eau Claire. There are several Metropolitan

Planning Organizations in Wisconsin that cross state lines including Duluth-Superior, La Crosse-Rochester, Lake County-Kenosha and Beloit.

Once the results of the 2010 Census become available, the advantages and disadvantages of having St. Croix and surrounding counties participate in an MPO should be discussed and options to pursue MPO designation evaluated.

## RELEVANT TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Since transportation systems are most often multi-jurisdictional in nature, it is important to consider existing State, County, and local plans and programs during local planning efforts. According to the State Comprehensive Planning Law, the transportation element of each comprehensive plan shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The inventory provided in this section provides the current state and regional information so that the county can make comparisons, coordinate activities, and utilize these services.

Some goals from applicable State plans include:

- *WisDOT Five-year Airport Improvement Program:* Maintain existing facilities of the state's airport system.
- *WisDOT Five-year Airport Improvement Program:* Expand facilities to meet the needs of commercial passenger and cargo airlines serving Wisconsin.
- *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020:* Increase levels of bicycling throughout Wisconsin doubling the number of trips made by bicycles by the year 2010.
- *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020:* Reduce crashes involving bicyclists and motor vehicles by at least 10 percent by the year 2010.

Federal, State, County, and local plans and programs addressing transportation are summarized below.

### State and Regional Transportation Programs

The following is a summary of the most significant state and regional transportation programs at work in our region. And while implemented by state and regional entities, the majority of these programs utilize federal funding.

All federal transportation programs and funding are determined by legislative act, most recently the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), signed in August of 2005, and set to expire in 2009. With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation's history. The two landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century—the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)—shaped the highway program to meet the Nation's changing transportation needs. SAFETEA-LU builds on this firm foundation, supplying the funds and refining the programmatic framework for investments needed to maintain and grow our vital transportation infrastructure. Through continued and new programs SAFETEA-LU emphasizes safety, congestion relief, innovative financing of highway infrastructure projects, improved freight transportation, addressing regional needs, improved technology for longer infrastructure life, environmental stewardship, and streamlining of the environmental process for transportation projects.

Those programs funded under SAFETEA-LU which are pertinent to our region, are administered by WisDOT, and are identified in the following subsection.

*Wisconsin Department of Transportation*

Transportation programming efforts in Wisconsin are largely coordinated or funded through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), including the distribution of federal transportation assistance dollars. Many of these key assistance programs for county and local governments are listed below.

- General Transportation Aids return a portion of all state-collected transportation revenues to local governments for road construction, maintenance, and other related costs. This has declined from a high of 30% to a current low of 22% and is an ongoing concern.
- Local Roads and Local Bridge Improvement Programs assist local governments in improving seriously deteriorating roads and bridges.
- Surface Transportation Program uses allocated federal funds for the improvement of federal-aid-eligible rural and urban roads and streets.
- Connecting Highway Aids are available to municipalities for roadways connecting to the State Trunk Highway system, in particular if increased traffic is experienced.
- Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program provides funds to local governments for signage improvements to improve visibility for elderly drivers and pedestrians.
- Rural and Small Urban Area Public Transportation Assistance and the Transit Assistance Program allocate federal funds to support capital, operating, and training expenses for public transportation services.
- Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program provides federal funds for the planning, start-up, and expansion of non-urban transit service projects.
- Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance funds provide counties with financial assistance to provide transportation services to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Capital funds through the Section 5310 Program are also available for non-profits and local governments. A related WisDOT-administered program is New Freedom, which provides Federal Transit Administration funds to private and public entities for programs which assist individuals with disabilities to overcome transportation-related barriers so they may get to work.
- Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP) provides start-up and development grant funding for projects which connect low-income workers with jobs through enhanced local transportation services. WETAP includes federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program funding and related requirements.
- Local Transportation Enhancement Program funds projects that increase multi-modal transportation alternatives (e.g., bicycling, pedestrian), landscaping/streetscaping, and the preservation of historic transportation structures.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program funds projects that construct or plan for bicycle or bicycle/pedestrian facilities. This program shares the same application process as the Local Transportation Enhancement Program.
- Safe Routes to School Program is a federal program administered by WisDOT aimed at helping communities to make it safer for children to walk and bike to and from school and to encourage them to do so. In addition to planning grants, implementation of education, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation programs and projects are also eligible under the program.

- Airport Improvement Program combines a variety of resources to fund improvements for the state's public-use airports which are primarily municipally owned. WisDOT is currently encouraging land use planning around airports and a *Wisconsin Airport Land Use Guidebook* is available to assist in these efforts. Additional program and regulatory support is also available through the Federal Aviation Administration.
- Freight Rail Programs for the preservation of existing rail service through rail acquisition and rehabilitation, and for the improvement of rail infrastructure.

Each year, WisDOT updates a four-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program of all highway and transit projects that propose to use federal funds. WisDOT also has a variety of specialty assistance programs, such as Flood Damage Aids, Rustic Roads, County Forest Road Aids, and the Adopt-A-Highway Program. Data for local roads is managed by WisDOT through the Internet-accessible Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR).

Our region falls entirely within WisDOT's northwest region which has offices in Eau Claire and Superior:

#### **Wisconsin Department of Transportation-NW Region**

718 W. Clairemont Avenue  
Eau Claire, WI 54701-5108  
Phone: (715) 836-2891

#### **Wisconsin Department of Transportation-Superior office**

1701 N. 4th Street  
Superior, WI 54880  
Phone: (715) 392-7925

#### ***Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources***

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does provide funding to local governments for trails, paths, routes, and other infrastructure for alternative modes of transportation, such as biking, walking/hiking, boating, and ATVs. Though these programs often have a recreational focus, such facilities can many times be an important component of a community's transportation strategy.

#### ***Wisconsin Department of Commerce***

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce administers many of the federal HUD Community Development Block Grant programs at the state level. This funding includes the CDBG-Public Facilities program for infrastructure and building projects which may include streets and specialized transportation projects.

### **STATE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS**

#### ***Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020***

Also known as Corridors 2020, this plan prioritizes highway construction and improvement needs and investments. It was adopted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in February 2000. Wisconsin's State Trunk Highway system, consisting of approximately 11,800 miles of roads, is aging and deteriorating at the same time traffic congestion is increasing. In response to this critical issue, WisDOT, in partnership with its stakeholders, has developed the State Highway Plan 2020, a 21-year strategic plan which considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints, and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin's preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs. The plan is updated every six years to reflect changing transportation technologies, travel demand, and economic conditions in Wisconsin.



**Wisconsin State Transportation Plan 2030 (Connections 2030)**

*Connections 2030* is Wisconsin's statewide, long-range multimodal plan. The plan addresses all forms of transportation; integrates transportation modes; and identifies policies and implementation priorities to aid transportation decision makers when evaluating program and project priorities over the next 20 years. The plan supports the governor's initiatives to grow a strong and vibrant economy while enhancing Wisconsin's quality of life. Wisconsin already has a quality transportation network. Efforts during the next 20 years will focus on maintaining and enhancing that system to support future mobility and economic growth. *Connections 2030* policy recommendations call for a comprehensive multimodal transportation approach to safely move passengers and freight, system modernization to address outdated infrastructure designs and improve connections between modes, and activities that combine more traditional approaches with innovation and technology. The plan's themes and policies provide a dynamic and flexible multi-year framework that links statewide transportation policy to implementation, planning, project scheduling and other department activities.

Connections 2030 differs from WisDOT's previous planning efforts. Beginning with the release of Translinks 21 in the mid 1990s, the Department has prepared a series of needs-based plans for various transportation modes. Connections 2030 is a policy-based plan. The policies are tied to "tiers" of potential financing levels. One set of policy recommendations focuses on priorities that can be accomplished under current funding levels. Another identifies policy priorities that can be achieved if funding levels increase. Finally, WisDOT also identifies critical priorities that must be maintained if funding were to decrease over the planning horizon of the plan. While the final plan includes statewide policy recommendations, some variation may exist specific to individual corridors.

In addition to policies related to each transportation mode, Connections 2030 also includes recommendations on cross-cutting issues such as economic development, land use, transportation finance, and the environment. WisDOT's goal is to provide a plan that can aid policy-makers in future transportation decisions. Connection 2030 is the statewide blueprint for transportation in the future.

Connections 2030 identifies a series of multimodal corridors for each part of the state. Each corridor identifies routes and/or services of several modes such as highways, local roads, rail, air, transit, etc.

The multimodal corridors build on the idea of the Corridors 2020 network, first established in 1988, which identified a system of two-lane and multi-lane highways. The network is made up of two subsystems:

- Backbone system: 1,550-mile network of multi-lane highways connecting all major population and economic regions of the state.
- Connector system: 2,100-mile network of high-quality two-lane highways directly linking significant economic and tourism centers to the Backbone system.

The full text of Connections 2030 is available at:

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/connections2030.htm>.

**Midwest Regional Rail System**

Nine mid-western states, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration are working on proposals for intercity high-speed passenger rail. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative is intended to develop and improve the 3000-mile Midwest Regional Rail System. This plan was published in February 2000.

***Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020***

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation identifies the maintenance and improvement programs for public-use airports in the State Airport System. Airports are not itemized for activities and funding so it cannot be determined which airports are in need of improvements.

***Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan – 2020***

This is the state's major plan for developing and integrating bicycles into the transportation system. It was adopted by WisDOT in 1998 and looked at creating a system of bikeways using suitable routes along county and state highways.

***State Recreational Trails Network Plan***

This plan was adopted in 2001 by WisDOT as an amendment to the Wisconsin State Trail Strategic Plan to identify a network of trail corridors throughout the state consisting of more than 4,000 miles of trails known as the Trail Interstate System.

***Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan***

This plan was completed in 2001 by WisDOT and lays out state policies for the provision of pedestrian facilities which address coordination with existing transportation facilities and pedestrian-friendly development.

## SUMMARY

St. Croix County's highway system is well-developed and maintained, and serves automobile users particularly well, though traffic volumes are increasing over much of the County. The availability of other modes of transportation such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities may need to be modified as more people use these modes out of necessity, environmental concerns, convenience, or for health reasons.

Key to the future of transportation in and around St. Croix County over the next several decades are increasing commuter traffic, aging of the population, the rising cost of operating a vehicle, and changing technology.

The following summarizes the existing conditions and trends of transportation in St. Croix County:

- There are 1,923 miles of public road in St. Croix County, under the jurisdiction of the State of Wisconsin, St. Croix County, or local governments.
- Traffic volumes in St. Croix County have been generally increasing, and moderate to severe congestion is anticipated on several highways by 2020 if no improvements are made.
- The County's portion of Interstate 94 is the second most heavily travelled segment of interstate highway in the State of Wisconsin, with projections exceeding 85,000 vehicles per day at the St. Croix River Bridge by 2020.
- WisDOT's six year highway plan includes between \$88,000,000 and \$110,000,000 for projects within St. Croix County.
- Vehicle crashes on public roadways increased nearly 33 percent from 1998 to 2007. Crashes on local roads (excluding State or County highways) increased approximately 53 percent. However crashes on state and federal highways have steadily declined since 2003.
- There are over 280 bridges in St. Croix County; at any time about five percent are classified as either functionally obsolete or structurally deficient. *This does not mean that they are unsafe for travel.*
- Public transit in the County is limited to shared ride taxi services available in the cities of New Richmond and River Falls, and immediate surrounding areas. These services have lift-equipped vans which are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The St. Croix County Aging and Disability Resource Center provides demand-response transit for limited hours on weekdays for nine senior nutrition sites. The Department also coordinates a volunteer, demand-response service for seniors and those with disabilities. Similar volunteer-based programs are coordinated by the New Freedom Transportation Program and the Interfaith Caregivers of St. Croix County.
- Jefferson Lines, an intercity bus service between the Twin Cities, Green Bay, and Milwaukee, makes a stop in Hudson at the Carmichael Road Park & Ride lot.
- The St. Croix County Parks and Recreation Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, was adopted in 2008. This plan includes a suitability analysis, bicycle system recommendations, and a review of existing local bike plans.
- Only 18.7 percent of employed persons living in St. Croix County work in the same town, village, or city where they live; just less than 30 percent work in a different St. Croix County

community; 7.6 percent work in another Wisconsin county, mostly in Eau Claire County; and 43.5 percent work in Minnesota.

- Two active rail lines transverse the County—Union Pacific railroad and Wisconsin Central Limited. No passenger service is available, though such service is being evaluated by WisDOT in Trans 2030 and promoted by local advocacy groups.
- St. Croix County has one public airport—New Richmond Regional Airport—which is the fifth largest municipal airport in Wisconsin and averages 122 flights per day.